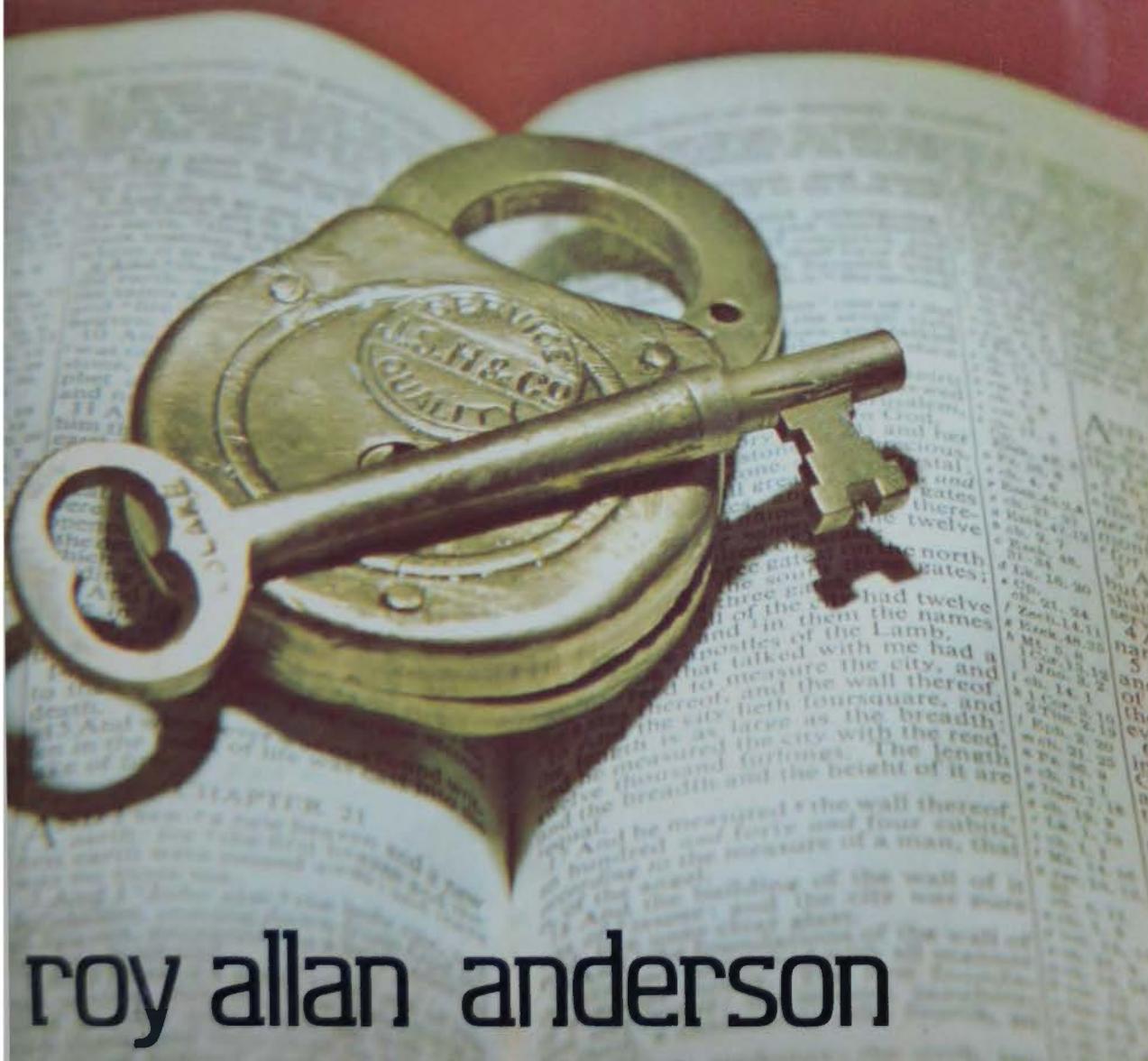


unfolding the revelation

revised

This book may be your key to unlocking the truth stored in one of the most important documents in the history of the earth! This book may change your life!



roy allan anderson

Know what's really going on!

The Biblical book of Revelation contains a message from God through Jesus Christ to all Christians. Its purpose is to show all Christians events soon to occur. Properly understood, it reveals the behind-the-scenes meaning of events which wrap up the history of our aging planet earth and introduce the earth made new!

God has reserved "a blessing" for those who read and heed the words of this Revelation of Jesus Christ. Those who begin to understand this last book in the Bible will begin to encounter an entirely different religious experience in the form of a great revival!

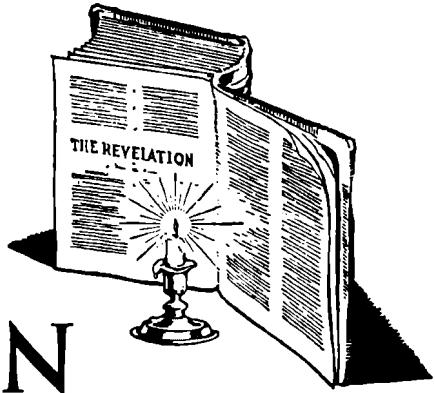
For the many who want to understand Revelation better, Roy Allan Anderson has written *Unfolding the Revelation* (revised, 1974). His "sole purpose is to make this last book of the Bible . . . a true revelation of Jesus Christ," who holds the destiny of our earth and your own personal future in His hands.

Roy Allan Anderson is a life-long student of the Bible. He has served his Lord many years as evangelist, pastor, leader of pastors, teacher, and author. Among his other books are *The God-Man: His Nature and Work; Preachers of Righteousness; and Secrets of the Spirit World.*

**UNFOLDING THE REVELATION
REVISED**

Unfolding the **REVELATION**

REVISED



*Evangelistic Studies
for Public Presentation*

by ROY ALLAN ANDERSON

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Preface

Since this book was first published, much has been happening in our world, especially in Bible lands, making necessary another revision which will bring it up-to-date. A short appendix has also been added, with notes to help the reader. But the original objective of the book, the portrayal and unveiling of Jesus Christ, is unchanged.

What, another book on the Revelation! Well, not exactly, for this is a revision, and its sole purpose is to make this last book of the Bible, to the student, a true revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Carpenter of Nazareth was also the Eternal God, through whom all creation came into existence and by whom we are saved. In the vast sweep of human history, Christ is the dominant figure. While He was God from eternity, yet in human flesh He shared the tragic lot of humanity. As He worked among men and walked the dusty roads of Palestine He lived a perfect life untainted by sin. He spoke with authority; twenty-five times in the Synoptic Gospels we read that His word was with power. In the book of Revelation we will find Him at the center.

Let us first think about His character, for here was one who never had to apologize or repeal a single utterance; One who was never embarrassed or impatient. Nor was He ever late for an appointment.

What a Man! But He was more than man; He was God in human flesh. He came to give us a glimpse of God and to show the way back to the Father's house. In the Revelation we see Him, not as a misunderstood, maligned outcast, but as the eternal King reigning in majesty, and inviting us to share with Him the throne of Deity.

"Blessed is he that readeth!" This is the promise of God, and the first of seven beautiful beatitudes found in this book.

Unfolding the Revelation first appeared in 1953, and the in-

terest and enthusiasm expressed by readers around the world have led to this revision. While the same form and interpretation have been preserved, yet its message should prove to be even more positive and realistic. During four decades of teaching the Apocalypse in college, seminary, and large public Bible classes, the author has witnessed the tremendous effect such study has upon men and women. The same Spirit that gave these truths to John on Patmos is present to make the message clear today.

This unveiling of our Lord becomes more meaningful if we study it in the light of John's exclamation on the banks of the Jordan. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." This is the book of the Lamb, the Lamb "in the midst of the throne." Twenty-eight times in Revelation He is called by that name, signifying that His sacrifice is central in all He does for us. He is now our High Priest, ministering for us in the temple in heaven. Soon that intercessory ministry will cease and He will return as King of kings and Lord of lords to claim His people.

From an inspired source comes this assurance: "When this book of Revelation is better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience." "When we understand what this book means to us there will be seen among us a great revival." May God speed this understanding and hasten the revival!

The Revelation was written for Christians living at a particular time and under particular circumstances. It is vital that we capture the spirit of the apostolic church and know the conditions under which those early Christians lived. Recently I was privileged to visit Patmos and the area of the "seven churches." This meant much. Books by many authors have also stimulated thought. To these authors, and my students, and a host of friends, I express sincere appreciation.

THE AUTHOR.

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**TO MYRA
WHO HAS SHARED MY
LIFE AND LABORS
FOR FIFTY YEARS,
AND TO ALL LOVERS OF
THE WORD**

The Book of Revelation

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, or the Apocalypse, is unique among the books of the Bible—unique in its form, its symbolism, and its meaning. It comes to us from God the Father and from Jesus, through whom alone any divine revelation can come to man. And He sent it to John through His angel messenger (Revelation 1:1) who, according to Luke 1:19, is Gabriel.

Who Wrote the Apocalypse?

Concerning the author's identity there need be little question. Four times he calls himself "John," and declares he has previously borne record of the Word of God. The fourth Gospel and three Epistles bear this name. The first Epistle opens with a declaration that the author is speaking of what his eyes have seen and his hands have handled of "the Word of life." The opening sentence of the Gospel of John speaks of "the Word" or *logos* as being "with God." But more—"the Word *was* God." Then later, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Verse 14. Then near the close of this Gospel we read: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." John 20:31.

Eusebius, the church historian, speaks of the author of Revelation as the "Elder John" who seems to have been well known in Ephesus, possibly being identified with the "Ephesian School" which developed in the latter part of the first century. The writer of the second and third epistles of John calls himself "the elder." There is really no reason to wonder whether John the elder and

John the writer of the fourth Gospel are the same person who wrote the Revelation.

While some may still doubt this authorship, it has been accepted from the earliest times. What other John was there of whom we have any knowledge who had sufficient influence or authoritative standing in the early church to have addressed such a message to the churches? Moreover, it is claimed that the author of the Apocalypse was the first person in church history to be known as *theologos*, "the theologian." The following statement by a scholar of a century ago sums up the position which seems even more certain today than when it was written:

"There is scarcely a book in the whole Bible whose genuineness and inspiration were more strongly attested on its first appearance than the Apocalypse. No doubts whatever seem to have been entertained on these points. Suffice it now to say, that Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Melito,—that is, eminent teachers in the church, in the next age to that in which it was written—proclaim that its writer was St. John, the beloved disciple of Christ. Such was *then* the voice of the church."—Chr. Wordsworth, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, page 22. Quoted by J. A. Seiss in *The Apocalypse*, vol 1, pp. 30, 31.

According to tradition, John was the sole survivor of the original apostles, every one of the others having met a martyr's death. He was summoned to Rome to appear before Emperor Domitian, "the last of the twelve great Caesars," to be tried for his faith. So convincing was his defense that "his hearers were astonished at his wisdom and eloquence." They could not gainsay his testimony. The emperor, filled with rage, ordered that he be cast into a caldron of boiling oil. "But the Lord preserved the life of His faithful servant, even as He preserved the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 569, 570. Later, by decree of the emperor, he was banished to the Isle of Patmos to serve a life sentence.

It is generally believed that this was about A.D. 94-95. That would make John almost one hundred years old when these

events occurred. Upon the death of Domitian, Nerva came to the throne, and the usual happened—the political prisoners were freed. It is believed that John then returned to Ephesus on the mainland. But while on Patmos, he received the visions contained in this unique book.

Not long ago I visited this felon's isle, this jagged rock in the midst of the sea. What impressions I received! To be torn from home and kindred and abandoned to this inhospitable solitude, must have seemed to the apostle like being "tethered with the leash of death." Yet this spot became a grandstand from which the poet-prophet viewed the whole panorama of human history. Though old in years, his eyes grew young as eternity burst into view. The rugged rocks and the surging seas seemed to echo the trumpet-voiced message he was commissioned to bear to the church. What though his hands were manacled and his feet in irons; his soul was nevertheless responsive to the Spirit. As the whirlpool of history was opened to him he read its dark secrets, seeing and hearing things neither seen nor heard before. In the blaze of that burning vision life took on new meaning. The waves that crashed like thunder on the shore spoke of a power far greater than the mailed legions of Rome. Then under the prophetic impulse he dipped his pen in inspiration and wrote that deathless message which for eighteen centuries has been the great apocalyptic epic of all literature—the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Purpose of the Book

The book is called "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," or "a Revelation *from* Jesus Christ" (Phillips), to show what will come to pass. But in another sense it is a revelation *about* Christ.

The *Old Testament* reveals Christ in prophecy; the *Gospels* reveal Him in His earthly life, ministry, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension; the *Acts* and the *Epistles* reveal the early triumphs of the church under the ministry of His Holy Spirit. In the *Revelation* Christ is pictured in glory at the right hand of

God as the *High Priest* and *Minister* of the heavenly sanctuary. He is also pictured as the *Supreme Judge* before whom all nations must appear. The final scenes depict the Saviour as *King of kings* and *Lord of lords* reigning forever over the saints in Paradise restored. Thus the revelator performs the final unveiling ceremony that makes possible an unobstructed view of the Lamb of God. It is really a panorama of the glory of Christ. The book of Genesis tells the story of creation, the fall of man, and Paradise lost. But the Revelation ushers in the scenes of Paradise restored.

Throughout the prophetic structure of the book, the focus is on Christ, who is the center of all prophecy—"the bright and morning Star." "The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation should be carefully studied, and in connection with them the words, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'"—*Gospel Workers*, page 148. The Son of God is mentioned by name, or by the pronoun denoting Him, more than one hundred forty times in the first three chapters. This emphasizes the fact that the central Person of the book is Jesus.

In the Gospel narrative, John says that the Eternal God, "the Word," "was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14. The Greek word translated "dwelt" is *skenoo*, more accurately rendered "tabernacled" or "encamped." The idea springs from a kindly Arab custom. One who wished to join a caravan was encouraged to pitch his tent beside the group and make his journey with them. This is a beautiful illustration of the Incarnation, for in flesh God was tabernacled with man. He stooped low to take our human nature, and thus He veiled His glory. Traveling with us over the rough road of life, He at last died for us on the cross, to redeem us from death. The grave must take Him; but it could not hold Him. He shattered its power, ascended to His Father, and was "crowned with glory and honor" (Hebrews 2:9)—the glory which He had from all eternity. As He walked with men in the flesh that glory was veiled; but now, seated on the throne of the universe, He reigns in unveiled and unrivaled glory as coregent in the government of the universe. John, who knew

His Lord so well in the flesh, now falls at His feet in breathless awe as he views Him in majesty (Revelation 1:17), and so will we when this Revelation of Jesus Christ grips our souls. To know Him as our King, we must first know Him as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29.

No American has etched his name deeper in history than Abraham Lincoln, who saved the Union and abolished slavery. A few years ago a clever penman wrote the Emancipation Proclamation so deftly that to an onlooker standing just a few feet away it became a picture revealing every detail of Lincoln's rugged features. Closer inspection, however, showed that it was not a drawing but a copy of the declaration that freed the slaves. The penman had not only created a picture, but through his art had also traced the philosophy that shaped the life of the great emancipator.

This unique book unveils a greater Emancipator, who has freed not one race, but all races of men. While the Apocalypse reveals things "which must shortly come to pass," it is primarily a revelation of Jesus Christ who died that we might live. When Lincoln died, his body was taken to his home city for burial. As the slow and silent procession made its way along the hushed streets, the crowd was visibly moved to tears. A Negro mother, eager to help her little son to catch a better view, lifted him onto her shoulders and said through her tears, "Take a long look at him, honey; he died for you." As we turn the pages of the Apocalypse let us take a long look at Him who gave His all to emancipate us from death and the slavery of sin, knowing that through all the changing kaleidoscope of history He is working out His eternal purpose.

To Whom Was the Revelation Written? Chapter 1:1

This Revelation might be said to have come in answer to the prayer of Paul. Writing to the church at Ephesus, he tells how he prayed that they might be given a revelation of Christ. Ephesians 1:15-18. Thirty years later John received this Revelation, and the first church to which it was sent was Ephesus. It was written not for the world, but for the church, for the servants of God. Revela-

tion 1:1. When God wrote on the palace wall of Belshazzar, the "wise men" could not read the writing. But Daniel interpreted the message. Those who walk with God can know His secret. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7.

The Second Advent the Keynote of the Book

While this Revelation was particularly helpful for the persecuted saints in John's day, and has spoken to every age since, yet it has a special message for those living just before our Lord's return. See chapter 22:6, 7, 10.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds," cries the apostle, "and every eye shall see Him." Revelation 1:7. No subject has a greater place in the New Testament than has the second advent of Jesus. One verse in every twenty-five touches this theme. Perhaps no doctrine in the Christian message possesses more power than does this.

"Like a magnet, it lifts the heart of the believer out of the world, and out of his low self, and enables him to stand with Moses on the mount, and transfigures him with the rays of blessed hope and promise which stream upon him in those sublime heights. It is the most animating and most sanctifying subject in the Bible."—J. A. Seiss, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 35.

The Patmos seer closes the book with the exclamation, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Revelation 22:20.

The Seven Apocalyptic Beatitudes

Like the Sermon on the Mount, the Revelation breathes the benediction of heaven. Note these beatitudes:

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear." 1:3.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." 14:13.

"Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments." 16:15.

"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper." 19:9.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." 20:6.

"Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." 22:7.

"Blessed are they that do His commandments," or "those who wash their robes" (R.S.V.). 22:14.

To Whom Was the Revelation Sent? Chapter 1:11

The seven churches mentioned in the Revelation were not the only churches in Asia, nor were they the most important. Their selection, however, is deeply significant. The cities where these churches existed lay along the imperial post road. This Roman highway was built about 133 B.C. It passed through *Ephesus*, *Smyrna*, *Pergamos*, *Thyatira*, *Sardis*, *Philadelphia*, and *Laodicea*, where it joined another main post highway. The number "seven" in the Revelation is very significant. There are seven *churches*, seven *letters*, seven *stars*, seven *candlesticks*, seven *Spirits of God*, seven *lamps of fire*, seven *seals*, seven *trumpets*, seven *horns*, seven *eyes*, seven *thunders*, seven *heads*, seven *crowns*, seven *angels*, seven *vials*, seven *mountains*, etc. The number "seven" as found throughout the Scriptures denotes completeness, universality, or perfection.

Not only the number "seven," but the *names* themselves are also significant. These seven letters contain a message for the church through all the centuries from apostolic times until the setting up of Christ's kingdom.

"It is the opinion of very learned writers upon this book, that our Lord, by these *seven churches*, signifies all the churches of Christ to the end of the world; and by what He saith to them, designs to show what shall be the state of the churches in all ages, and what their duty is."—Matthew Pool, *Annotations Upon the Holy Bible*, vol. 3, p. 952.

"The seven churches represent seven phases or periods in the church's history, stretching from the time of the apostles to the coming again of Christ, the characteristics of which are set forth partly in the names of these churches, but more fully in the epistles addressed to them."—J. A. Seiss, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 142.

"The epistles to the seven churches, besides describing what is undoubtedly historical, have so many allusions which are evidently figurative and mystical that there is the strongest reason for accepting the view . . . 'that these seven churches should prophetically sample [show] us a sevenfold temper and constitution of the whole church according to the several ages thereof, answering the pattern of the churches named here.'”—A. J. Gordon, *Ecce Venit (Behold He Cometh)*, pages 66, 67, note.

Some have attempted to declare the precise date when one period ended and another began, but as when traveling on a highway we pass from one city to another, the population becoming more dense or growing more sparse, making it difficult at times to know where one city really ends and another begins; so on this highway of the Christian Era it is difficult to determine the exact date for the beginning and ending of any particular church period. Yet each period is marked by definite contrasts, enabling us to know when we are in the midst of a new era. This will be emphasized in our next chapter.

Saviour, High Priest, and Coming King

These letters to the seven churches not only forecast trends in church history, but they also set forth the varied aspects of the ministry of our Lord and form an appropriate setting for the message of the whole book.

"The seven descriptions all differ from one another; and, taken together, they make up the complete account given in Revelation 1 of *One like unto a [sic] son of man*. The Divine Author presents Himself in a different aspect to each individual church; and the seven aspects make up His complete personal description, as the different churches make up the complete and universal church."—W. M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*, page 197.

The book opens with a picture of Christ's vicarious sacrifice and priestly ministry (Revelation 1:5, 12, 13) and closes with the announcement of His certain return, at which time He will

bring the reward of eternal life to those who have been faithful.

The Revelation is apocalyptic in its literary form, a form which views history as a unity culminating in the final establishment of the eternal kingdom of God. Victory comes at last to the saints of God through the *redeeming Lamb*, who was slain and yet lives. As we catch the echo of the ages, we cry with angels and redeemed men: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

The Ground of Salvation Is Grace

The message of the book begins with a threefold salutation of grace, from the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Son. Revelation 1:4, 5. "The Father in the absoluteness of His unchanging nature and universal presence, the Spirit in all the completeness of His manifold energies and diversified operations, and the Son in the virtues of His blood-sealed testimony."—J. A. Seiss, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 47.

"Grace be unto you, and peace," writes John. But it is a "peace" that is rooted in "grace." To what avail would it be to pass with pomp and power over the stage of time, only to sink at last into the darkness and sorrows of eternity? But if we would endure, our standing before God must be absolutely on the ground of grace and not of works. This mighty truth of righteousness by faith in Christ alone is expressed in verses 5 and 6. The Lord "loved us," then He "washed us." After having washed us He made us "kings and priests" or a kingdom of priests (R.V.). God did not wait until we were cleansed before He loved us, but because He loved us He cleansed us. It was while we were aliens, fleeing from His presence and actually His enemies, that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." 1 John 4:14. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me," cries David. The Hebrew word *radaph* means to pursue or chase. Francis Thompson's poem, "The Hound of Heaven," sets forth this thought in moving verse. God pursues the sinner constantly and for the one purpose that He might reclaim him and re-establish him as a king, even sharing His throne with him.

I was sitting in my study in Washington one summer day. A family was living upstairs—father, mother, and a wee girl about twenty months old. Her father had fastened a little gate across the stairway to prevent the little one from rolling down the stairs. But this day those itching fingers had fiddled with the lock until they got it opened. Then quietly she managed to come downstairs. Her mother evidently missed her. Seeing the gate open, she became alarmed and called out. At that moment the child passed in front of my window, and when her mother called, you should have seen her—running across the lawn as fast as she could! She was free!

Then I heard the mother coming down the stairs and calling as she came. But this naughty girl, chuckling with delight, was asserting her independence. She did not know it, but she was running headlong into trouble.

I did not see exactly what happened, because a tree shut out the view; but I knew immediately, for the mother screamed. I dashed out in time to see that girl fall over a four-foot brick wall into the rose bed. But I saw more than that; I saw real mother love. Without attempting to go around to the steps, the mother jumped down after the girl, and with eager hands picked up that bundle of naughtiness, covered with tears and blood and dirt. Not stopping to consider the effect on her lovely white dress, that mother cuddled the child to herself. She was sure the little one had broken an arm or a leg, or at least her nose. I examined her, but everything seemed all right. She had learned a good lesson.

In her eagerness that mother never thought about herself or her clothes; her one thought was for her baby. Both of them were crying. She took the girl upstairs, not to thrash her, but to wash her. She did not stand on the edge of the wall shaking her finger and saying, "You naughty girl! It serves you right. And when you get sorry enough to come back upstairs and apologize, I'll take you in." No! she never even thought about that. Neither does our Saviour say that to us. He left the heights of heaven to

rescue us. His wounded hands and bloodstained garments speak eloquently of His love.

Divine Love, an Exhaustless Theme

"Alpha and Omega," one of the symbolic names of Christ (chapter 1:8) is significant. As the alphabet provides an exhaustless medium of expression, so is Jesus and His love an exhaustless theme for contemplation. Eternity will be all too short to reveal the wonders of His love and power. In the book of Revelation our Saviour is introduced to us under many different titles, each important and expressive. He is first introduced as Jesus Christ; and of all the names in the world, *Jesus* is the most beautiful. Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage in moving eloquence says:

"It stands for love, for patience, for kindness, for forbearance, for self-sacrifice, for magnanimity. It is aromatic with all odors and accordant with all harmonies. Sometimes I see that name, and the letters seem to be made out of tears, and then again they look like gleaming crowns. Sometimes they seem as though twisted out of the straw on which He lay, and then as though built out of the thrones on which His people shall reign. Sometimes I sound that word 'Jesus,' and I hear coming through the two syllables the sigh of Gethsemane and the groan of Calvary; and again I sound it, and it is all a-ripple with gladness and a-ring with hossanna. . . . Let it drip from the harp's strings and thunder out in organ's diapason. Sound it often, sound it well, until every star shall seem to shine it, and every flower shall seem to breathe it, and mountain and sea, and day and night, and earth and heaven acclaim in full chant: 'Blessed be His glorious name forever; The name that is above every name.'"—*The Palestine Sermons of Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage*, page 184.

Join all the glorious names of wisdom, love, and power
That mortals ever knew, that angels ever bore:
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too mean to set my Saviour forth.

—Isaac Watts.

Walking Among the Churches

In verse 20, Jesus is represented as holding the ministers of His church, symbolized by “the seven stars,” in His right hand. It is a beautiful picture of His personal regard for His own. Then we see Him walking among the “candlesticks,” or the churches. No matter what persecution the church has had to endure, the Lord has been with His suffering saints, upholding them, sharing their trials, and feeling every wound inflicted by their enemies.

If we would understand the message of this book we must study it in relation to the transcendent Christ by whose power the massive tyranny of darkness was shattered and the future of this planet was forever changed. He who “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,” and who walks amid the churches, says to each and all, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

The Book Rooted in the Old Testament

More than 270 direct quotations, or expressions, couched in Old Testament language, are found in the Revelation. Rooted in this fertile soil, it is like a tree yielding the rich fruitage of the inspiration of the ages. Because “the whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ,” therefore this book, drawing its nurture from the prophets of old, could be nothing else but a revelation of Jesus Christ. While Patmos was regarded by Rome as a place of punishment, yet that barren island became to the apostle the door of hope and the setting for the sublimest communion with heaven. Then let us take our places at the side of the prophet, and by the enabling Spirit of God let us catch the inspiration of these messages as we traverse the centuries and move on into the stupendous climax of human history. Let us witness this all-powerful King and Christ of God as He comes at last to vindicate His name, to strip the enemy of his power, to raise the dead, to be glorified in His saints, to destroy the author of evil, to renew this sin-cursed earth, to reward His suffering saints, and to reign forever as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The Seven Epistles of Christ to His Church

IN CHAPTER 1:13 the Son of man is seen in the midst of the candlesticks, or the churches, sharing their experiences, understanding their needs. This has ever been a source of comfort, especially in times of persecution. In the following chapter we will be studying the trials and the triumphs of the church. But whatever the experience through which the people of God are called to pass, they may be sure that the Lord is with them. His parting promise was, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20.

The Conquering Christ in the Midst of His Church

When the prophet John beheld in vision the glory of his Lord, His eyes were as flames of fire and His countenance shining as the sun. No wonder John fell at His feet as dead. Revelation 1:17.

What a contrast from those days when Jesus tramped the dusty roads of Palestine! No longer is He despised and rejected of men; no longer is He clothed in the travel-stained garments of an itinerant Teacher; but, robed in royal attire befitting His office as King, He ministers before the throne. He is a Priest-King, to be sure, but nevertheless a King. In Genesis 14:18-20 and Hebrews 7:1-14, we read the story of Abraham's visit with Melchizedek, king of Salem. That Canaanite king who came forth and blessed the faithful patriarch is one of the many Scriptural types of Christ. Just as Abraham offered his worship to God through the ministry of Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem, so

we today offer our worship to the Eternal Father through our great High Priest who, as "King of Righteousness," officiates "after the order of Melchizedek." Hebrews 6:20. It is important to notice that Christ is not a priest under the Aaronic order. Instead He is of the royal order of Melchizedek. It is in glory and majesty that He ministers for us in heaven.

Christ, the Victor Over Death

When John in vision beheld Jesus in His glory, it overwhelmed him, and he "fell at His feet as dead." But the Lord said to him: "Fear not: . . . I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Revelation 1:17, 18. Precious promise indeed! What comfort these words have brought to the people of God throughout the centuries!

Martyrs, millions of them, have gone to their graves sustained by the knowledge that Jesus, for whom they were giving their lives, had already conquered death, and in His nail-pierced hands is the key that will unlock every grave. Death can hold no terror for the one who really knows his Lord. Why should we fear? Our conquering Saviour Himself declares, "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." John 5:28, 29. Paul, in his great treatise on the resurrection, declares, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Then he refers to Hosea 13:14: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Corinthians 15:22, 55. Death has no sting and the grave no victory since Jesus burst its cruel bands and unlocked the door of the tomb. So, with the apostle of old, let us say: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Verses 57, 26.

The Seven Epistles of Christ to His Church

Those messages to the churches were written for the people of God in every age. As we have already noticed, they cover

the entire history of the New Testament church from the first advent of Christ to His return in glory. The imperial post road of Asia Minor, already referred to, became an impressive symbol of the great highway of time along which the church has traveled.

We will understand these letters better if we study them against the background of the cities to which they were first sent. Knowing something of the environment in which the members of those churches lived and labored gives new meaning to many expressions. Six outstanding features will be noted in each letter: (1) the meaning and significance of the name; (2) the characteristic of the city; (3) the commendation; (4) the reproof (in five of the letters); (5) the counsel; (6) the promise to the overcomer.

The following diagram gives the sequence of the messages. We need to become familiar with their order:

First Advent

Second Advent



Ephesus|Smyrna|Pergamos|Thyatira|Sardis|Philadelphia|Laodicea

The Epistle to Ephesus, Revelation 2:1-7

Meaning and Significance of the Name. Ephesus means "desirable." The city itself was situated in a very desirable location geographically. So that period of church history when the apostles were living and could personally guide and counsel the leaders was indeed a desirable period.

The Characteristic of the City. Ephesus has been called "the City of Change" because of the shifting character of the site on which the city was built. It could rightly represent the beginning of the Christian Era, for no period in history has witnessed more drastic changes in human thought. The revolutionary message Jesus brought challenged every system of thought. Nothing could impede the progress of Christianity. It was "born in a storm, nurtured in a cyclone, and swept the world like a tornado." And Ephesus, the City of Change, symbolized that era.

Ephesus was built during the eleventh century B.C. It was beautifully situated. It could boast one of the finest harbors in West Asia, but it was subject to great geographical changes, the result of earthquakes. The place of its once famous harbor is today a marsh and sandy beach, unapproachable by ships. The harbor was abandoned in the fourth century A.D.

Ephesus was a leading commercial city. By imperial edict it was made the gateway to the province of Asia and became the starting place of the land trade route.

The city was adorned with a number of beautiful temples. Here was the seat of the worship of Diana, or Artemis, of Ephesus, not to be confused with the virgin huntress, sister of Apollo in Greek mythology. This Ephesian deity was an equivalent of Astarte or Ashteroth, and was the center of orgiastic fertility rites of a highly immoral character. She was known as the "great mother" or "great mother of the gods." At the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 451 the title "Mother of God" was applied to the Virgin Mary, an act which bears a strange odor in the setting of this pagan city.

The temple of Diana was originally built in 480 B.C. It was destroyed by fire on the night of Alexander's birth, 356 B.C. Alexander later offered to rebuild it at his own expense, but was refused the honor. Donations were received from all over Asia Minor, and the rebuilding required 120 years. It was one of the seven wonders of the world, built of red, blue, yellow, and white marble. Gold was said to have been used even for mortar. Wealth was abundant, and there are records of gifts up to \$850,000, which was an enormous sum for those days.

Ephesus was known as a "temple keeper" for the emperor. Acts 19:35, margin.

Commendation. Timothy was probably the pastor of the Ephesus church when John was writing. This church was commended for its unflagging zeal. It was a working church, toiling hard for God. Its members were loyal to the doctrines; they had tested their teachers. The word of God was the standard of their

faith. We could wish that every Christian church might require the same standard for its ministry. In many a church today, modernism or liberalism has eaten out the very heart of the Christian message.

The Nicolaitanes were a heretical group who believed that it was unnecessary to curb the desires of the flesh as required by the moral law. As Sir William Mitchel Ramsay points out, they joined the craft guilds and thus were required to pay worshipful homage to the emperor. They may have been the group in Ephesus referred to by Paul (Acts 19:19) who burned their pagan books. Nicolaitanes are mentioned also in the letter to the church at Pergamos.

Reproof. But despite their zeal, all labor is dead unless inspired by love; and Ephesus had lost its "first love," so Christ had to reprove His people. They had fallen from their place of high honor. The "mystery of iniquity" was already beginning its baneful work. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7. Nothing can replace true love. "The light of the whole life dies when love is done."

Counsel. Three words summarize the message: *Remember, repent, return.* The Master is saying, "Remember your early joy, when true love filled your heart. Repent of your sin; realize your perilous condition. Return to your original state, or else I will have to remove you." Works do not produce love nor can they take the place of love. Works are only the evidence of love. The relationship of Christ to His church is that of a bridegroom to his bride. Loss of love in the home is a tragedy and usually ends in the divorce court.

Promise. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Certain trees were objects of worship by the pagans in Ephesus. That was true also in some parts of Greece. When the sacred olive tree on the Acropolis of Athens put forth a new shoot after the city had been burned by the Persians, it was hailed as an omen of the future safety of the state.

But here is a promise that reaches forward to the time when

the overcomers will eat of the tree of life. When man sinned, he forfeited his right to the tree of life and was driven from the garden of God. Genesis 3:22-24. But if we will heed the voice of the Holy Spirit and by God's grace repent and overcome, we will eat of the tree of life when sorrow and sin are forever banished.

This is a wonderful promise of future bliss in the kingdom restored, but it must also be a present experience. Through the study of God's word we become partakers of Christ—the source of all spiritual life. When we thus daily partake of Him who is the true Tree of Life, then paradise begins here and now. "The pure in heart" may see God now, but we still look forward to that time when, in His kingdom, we shall dwell with Him forevermore.

"Hear What the Spirit Saith." Let us hear His loving message of rebuke. So many ears are stopped with doubt; so many voices lead astray. Let us then heed the counsel of the Lord and "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

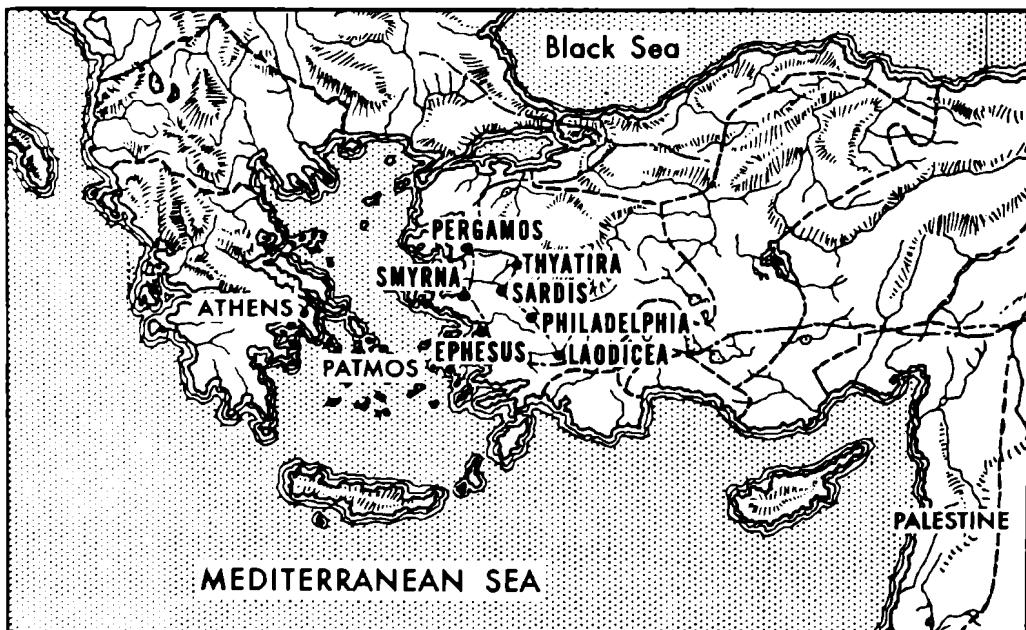
He speaks His message to every age, calling men and women, boys and girls, from selfishness and sin to righteousness and peace. Never did men look so eagerly for peace as they do today. War and tragedy, broken homes, broken hearts, and broken bodies, have bowed the nations in grief, and from hearts everywhere comes the cry for peace. Let us hear His voice of love saying, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest."

Christ's Messages to Smyrna and Pergamos

EPESUS was the natural gateway to the province of Asia. The imperial post road began there and ran northward through Smyrna to Pergamos, east to Thyatira, then south-east through Sardis to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.

The Epistle to Smyrna, Revelation 2:8-11

Meaning and Significance of the Name. Smyrna means "sweet smelling" and is synonymous with myrrh. This church of Smyrna was to pass through bitter persecution, but her sufferings, instead of destroying her, would give forth to the world the rich perfume of heaven. The garments of our Lord are fragrant with the odor



of myrrh and aloes and cassia (Psalm 45:8); myrrh symbolizing our Lord's suffering, aloes, the bitterness of sorrow, and cassia, the healing virtue of His sacrifice. For all who will open their hearts to Him, the promise is, "With His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53.

The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

—John Greenleaf Whittier.

The Characteristic of the City. Smyrna has been well called "The City of Life." It is one of the oldest cities in the world and lies about forty miles north of Ephesus. Of all the seven, it is the only one existent as a strong city today. Its present population is about 270,000, and it is now the largest city in Asia Minor. At the time John was writing, it was a beautiful city and was frequently spoken of as "The Ornament of Asia." It stood at an elevation of some 600 feet. A small hill, Mount Pagus, arose from the center of the city; on its top was a shrine dedicated to the Greek goddess Nemesis. Its sky line from a distance resembled a crown, and the city was sometimes called "The Crown of Ionia." No city has suffered more from sieges, massacres, earthquakes, fire, and plague; but it still lives. It is truly a city of life. More Christians are found in Smyrna than in any other Turkish city. It is significant that when Christ addresses the Christians of Smyrna, He speaks as one who "was dead, and is alive."

Commendation. Polycarp, one of the outstanding martyrs, is believed to have been the "angel," or the "minister," of this church at the time John was writing. According to Tertullian, Irenaeus, Eusebius, and Jerome, the apostle himself consecrated him bishop of Smyrna. The state required Polycarp to worship Caesar as god. His refusal cost him his life. Polycarp was burned at the stake on the hillside of Mount Pagus A.D. 168. His martyrdom, as well as the bitter experiences through which the Smyrnean church was passing, could well symbolize that period of church history.

Christians throughout the empire were compelled during this time to meet in secret. This second period of church history extended from about the end of the first century to the time of Constantine or shortly thereafter, or from about A.D. 100 to 350. Christ had no word of censure for this church. He knew where they lived and how they had labored. Among them were some who called themselves "Jews," but who were in reality of "the synagogue of Satan." These may have been descendants of Abraham by natural birth, but that was no guarantee of salvation. Paul says, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly: . . . but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly." "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children. . . . They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." Romans 2:28; 9:6-8. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:29. The real children of God are those who have been born again; that is, born of the Spirit. John 3:3-5.

Counsel. The "poverty" and hardship of these people was all known to the Lord. But they were "rich;" rich in faith, in love, in service. See 1 Timothy 6:18; James 2:5; Matthew 6:20. It is possible to be a rich poor-man, or a poor rich-man. True wealth is enrichment of character, not possession of goods or gold. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried." Revelation 2:10. Trials come by divine permission, but God is not the author of temptation. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God." James 1:13. Temptation comes from the devil, who continually opposes the people of God.

"Ye shall have tribulation ten days," God said. During the second and third centuries the Roman emperors tried to obliterate the church by persecution. They feared Christianity because it was making inroads into popular thought. They considered it a rival. A number of persecutions were instigated, ten in all, but Diocletian's persecution was the worst. This lasted ten years, from A.D. 303-313, or until Constantine came to the throne. If we

reckon this as prophetic time, where a day represents a literal year (Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6), then the “ten days” of persecution was truly fulfilled.

“Be thou faithful unto death,” says God. What inspiration this text has brought to the persecuted people of God through the centuries! With these words on their lips millions have gone to their death. God may not always see fit to remove the trial, but He pledges Himself to sustain us in it and promises the reward of eternal life.

Promise. “I will give thee a crown of life.” The crown of royalty can be worn for but a few years. But the crown of life endures forever. In the athletic contests so common in Smyrna, garlands adorned the victor’s brow. Such honor, however, was short-lived. But here is a promise of *everlasting* glory and honor. It may cost us our lives to be faithful, but death for the Christian is but a brief interlude when we rest from our labors. “When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” 1 Peter 5:4. And he “shall not be hurt of the second death.” Revelation 2:11. When the wicked man dies, he finds another death awaiting him: “the second death,” or the death of judgment. Revelation 20:6. But when the overcomer falls asleep in Jesus, he knows he will be raised, not for judgment, but for life eternal with Christ. Praise God for the certain hope of the gospel!

The Epistle to Pergamos, Revelation 2:12-17

Meaning and Significance of the Name. Pergamos means “height” or “elevation.” The city stood on an elevation of 1,000 feet and was built by the Aeolian Greeks about 1150 B.C. The elevation was a natural defense, and the city considered impregnable. Kings sometimes deposited their treasure there for safekeeping. Lysimachus placed his fortune of \$10,000,000 in this city.

Characteristic of the City. It was “a royal city.” It was made the capital of the province of Asia when Attalus III, the last of the Attalid kings, bequeathed his kingdom to Rome in 133 B.C.

The proconsuls who ruled there were vested with the symbol of authority: the broad, double-edged sword. The supreme court of the province was also located there. Life or death awaited the prisoners who came to this court. The One who addresses this church is "He which hath the sharp sword with two edges." Revelation 2:12. In the final judgment He will pronounce sentence on every soul. 2 Corinthians 5:10. But he knows the conditions under which men live, and His judgment will be just. He takes note of where men were born. Psalm 87:4-6.

Pergamos was the headquarters of Satan's religion. Christ said to this church: "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." Revelation 2:13. When the Persians overthrew Babylon, they gave the inhabitants of the city their freedom. But the Babylonian priests later led a revolt and were driven from the city. "The defeated Chaldeans fled to Asia Minor, and fixed their central college at Pergamos, and took the palladium of Babylon, the cubic stone, with them. Here, independent of state control, they carried on the rites of their religion."—William B. Barker, *Lares and Penates*, pages 232, 233. Pergamos, therefore, became the "seat" of the satanic system of the Babylonian "mysteries." The map on page 19 indicates by the dotted line the transfer of the Babylonian system to Pergamos and later to Rome.

This counterfeit religion was built on the claim that it made a bridge between heaven and earth. The ruling monarch became the head of the system. He had many titles, one of which, "Pontifex Maximus," is significant. *Pont* means a bridge; *factio*, I make; and *maximus*, greatest. Put together, it simply means The Greatest Bridge Builder. In Genesis 11:1-5 we have the story of the ancient Babel builders. They wanted to have a tower whose top might reach unto heaven, or "be in the heavens," as other translators read this passage. This occurred shortly after the great Flood in the days of Noah. Tremendous physical changes took place in our world at that time. In Genesis 8:22 we read of "cold and heat." These changes of temperature, so real in our lives today, seem to have been unknown before the Deluge.

They are not mentioned in the Genesis record of the times prior to that catastrophe.

The atmosphere as well as the surface of the earth is vastly different from what it was in antediluvian days, and we can well imagine that those who were preserved in the ark and were therefore able to compare the world after the Flood with the world as it was before the Flood were well aware of the changes and contrasts. The inhabitants of that time were not ignorant of the world in which they lived. But what caused the Flood? That was the question in their minds. And would there be another flood? God had assured Noah and his family that the world would never again be destroyed by a flood, but these scientific and religious philosophers were not content with the divine promise. They wanted to build a tower—an observatory—high enough to reach above the dense atmosphere and thus enable them through so-called scientific investigation to discover a natural cause for the Flood and possibly assure themselves that nothing like that could ever happen again. The whole movement was apostate and grew out of unbelief of God's promise. The mystery cult of Babylon sprang from this, and in one form or another this apostate religion has plagued the people of God ever since.

Pergamos was for some time the headquarters of this mystery cult. But when the king of Pergamos bequeathed his kingdom to the Romans, this whole cult was transferred to Rome, which has since been the headquarters of this false system. The "title," the "keys," and the "vestments" have all been absorbed into apostate Christianity. Pergamos thus became a link between ancient Babylon and Rome. It seemed natural for the deification of the emperors to begin in this city.

Pergamos was a city of temples, the most important of which was the Temple of Zeus. This temple was dedicated to Aesculapius, "the serpent god" or "the god of healing" or "the man-instructing serpent," who gave man the knowledge of good and evil. A living serpent was always kept in the Temple of Zeus as an object of worship. A famous school of medicine was also located

there, the emblem of which was the serpent or the caduceus twined around a pole. This has come down to us today as the emblem of the medical profession. The city was a great educational center. Its library of 200,000 books rivaled the Egyptian library at Alexandria. When Egypt refused to supply the people of Pergamos with papyrus for the manufacture of paper, they prepared a new kind of writing material from carefully treated skins. This new writing material was called "parchment." In German, *Pergament*.

Commendation. "Thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith." Even in Pergamos, the center of state religion and the very throne of Satan, God had a faithful people. Antipas is mentioned as having been martyred in Pergamos. Tradition tells us he was slowly baked in a brass bull that was heated until it was red-hot. It might well be a symbolic name representing all the martyrs of that period. Some have seen in this name the symbol of a movement to withstand the development of a hierarchy: *Anti*, meaning "against;" *papas*, meaning "father" or "pope." Whatever may have been the significance of the name, the church itself was commended for courage. And it took real courage to withstand the popular trend when apostate Christianity was being made the state religion and sat, as it were, on the throne of the Roman world.

Reproof. How quickly apostasy works! The Nicolaitane heresy, condemned by Christ in the letter to Ephesus, has developed from "deeds" on the part of a few (Revelation 2:6) to become a "doctrine" within the church (verse 15). Commenting on this heresy, Ramsay says:

"This school of thought and conduct played an important part in the church of the first century. . . . It was evidently an attempt to effect a reasonable compromise with the established usages of Greco-Roman society and to retain as many as possible of those usages in the Christian system of life. It affected most of all the cultured and well-to-do classes in the church, those who had most temptation to retain all that they could of the established social

order and customs of the Greco-Roman world, and who by their more elaborate education had been trained to take a somewhat artificial view of life and to reconcile contradictory principles in practical conduct through subtle philosophical reasoning. . . . It is highly probable that the Nicolaitanes either already had, or soon would have, reached the conclusion that they might justifiably comply with the current test of loyalty, and burn a little incense in honor of the emperor. . . . Their teaching was earthly, sensual, devilish. In their philosophical refinements of argumentation he saw only '*the deep things of Satan.*'"—W. M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*, pages 298-301.

It is compared to the subtle plan of Balaam, whose compromise led Israel into sin and vice.

Counsel and Promise. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Revelation 2:17. A pot of manna was placed in the sacred ark in the sanctuary erected by Moses. This was known as "the hidden manna" (Hebrews 9:3, 4), and was a type of Christ. John 6:26-63. Only as we feed on Him, "the living Bread," can we grow into His likeness.

The "white stone" also was significant. Judges in the courts of that day used white and black stones in making their decisions: white for acquittal, black for condemnation. Also, when slaves were freed, they were given white stones on which their names, sometimes new names, were inscribed. These stones were called *tessera*. They were badges of friendship, and they entitled the holders to special privileges. If a gladiator won fifteen victories in combat, he was given a white stone, symbol of freedom and honor.

As overcomers in Christ, we are set free from the shackles of sin to become members of the family of God, and are given a new name. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36. Possessing this new name (Isaiah 62:2), we are made "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who

can be against us?" Romans 8:17, 31. Not only does the Christian need a new name, but he must also feed on "the hidden manna" of God's word. Jeremiah says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Jeremiah 15:16. That is the experience of all who feed upon the precious word of God. Our trouble is we get so busy that we fail to take our portion of heavenly manna each day. God's ancient people were commanded to gather fresh manna every morning. Exodus 16:21. Then we read, "When the sun waxed hot, it melted." If they failed to gather it early they had none for that day. Let us determine that we will gather our portion before the day's duties begin.

O child of God! Awake and see the radiant dawn of day,
The rising sun bids thee arise to meditate and pray.
Arise and breathe the redolence of fragrant, dew-kissed flowers,
And gather morning manna in the early morning hours.

All nature is responsive to God's summons to arise,
Ten thousand happy voices raise a chorus to the skies.
The busy bee is searching for his honey from the flowers;
Thus search for "hidden manna" in the early morning hours.

There's sweetness in the lily—in the Rose of Sharon, too.
The Bible's leaves are petals—you must search them through
and through.
If you hunger for this nectar, you will search in every flower,
And you'll find the manna sweeter in the early morning hour.

—Adlai A. Esteb.

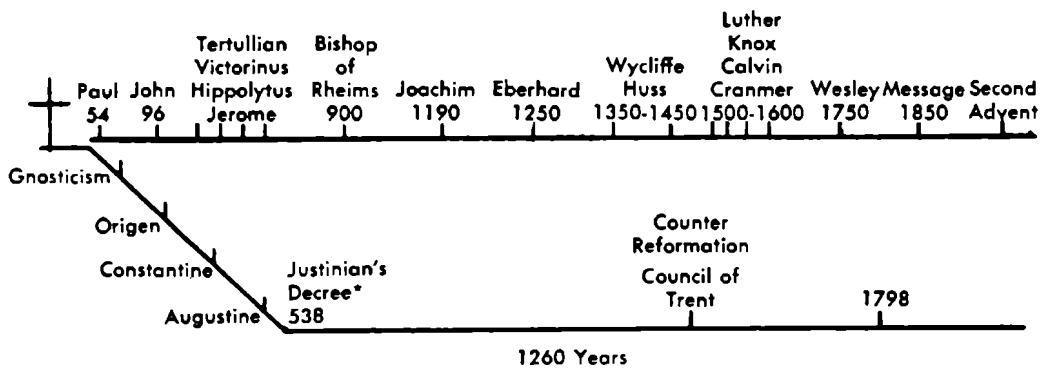
Christ's Epistles to Thyatira and Sardis

TRAVELING along the imperial Roman road, we come to the fourth city, Thyatira. As we have noticed in earlier chapters, this highway symbolizes the experience of the Christian church from the days of the apostles to the time when Christ returns in glory.

The sequence of these seven letters, as well as the particular messages themselves, is significant, for, taken together, the letters give a perfect picture of the church as seen through the eyes of her Lord. Christianity, which began in the fervor of the apostolic faith, suffered a severe lapse in the Middle Ages. This was foreseen by Paul, Peter, and John, each of whom, like the Lord Jesus Himself, warned the church of her peril. In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians he said, "That day [the day of our Lord's appearing] shall not come, except there come a falling away first." And further, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7. The spirit of apostasy was already at work in his day, but the full fruitage was yet to appear. The "falling away" that was to take place would permit "that man of sin" to "be revealed" "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (verses 3, 4); or, as James Moffatt translates it, "with the proclamation that he himself is God." Before the end of time, however, the church of God was to be brought back to the pure apostolic faith and fully clothed in the righteousness of Christ and filled with the

zeal and fervor of her original faith. Those who await the return of Jesus will have a pure faith and "be like Him." 1 John 3:2.

The following diagram indicates the lapse of faith, "the falling away," and the gradual recovery of the truth:



The Epistle to Thyatira, Revelation 2:18-28

Meaning and Significance of the Name. Thyatira means "sacrifice of contrition" and fittingly represents that period in church history when through apostasy simple faith was exchanged, or sacrificed, for outward works and penances. Salvation cannot be bought or earned; it is the gift of God. It comes to us by grace and grace alone. But in the fourth period of church history men turned from the simple gospel of Christ and in its place built up an elaborate ritual and a man-made priesthood. It was a sad day when professing Christianity exchanged contrition of heart for dead "works;" when the simple "faith of Jesus" was replaced by the elaborate ritual of the mass.

Characteristic of the City. The city itself gave the impression of "weakness made strong." It was built by Seleucus, one of Alexander's generals, in 280 B.C. and was at first a cavalry outpost. "It came into existence to be a garrison city. . . . But no city has been given by nature less of the look or strength of a fortress than Thyatira. . . . It possesses no proper acropolis, and the whole impression which the situation gives is of weakness, subjection, and dependence. . . . The history of Thyatira is a blank."—

W. M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*, pages 318, 319, 323.

There being no natural fortifications in that area, it was necessary to strengthen the northern defenses, so this city came into being. In later years it became a manufacturing city. Its leading industries were the manufacture of brass and bronze instruments. It was a place of foundries. It was also famed for the dyeing of cloth, especially red and purple. Lydia, whom Paul met at Philippi, was evidently a representative of one of those industries. See Acts 16:14. Tradition has it that it was she who carried the Christian message to Thyatira.

A great temple built in honor of Apollo, the sun-god, had a commanding place in the city. In this temple was an altar dedicated to a female deity.

Some Bible students believe that at the time John wrote this letter there was a woman in the church who posed as a prophetess and dominated the church, and that he referred to her as "Jezebel."

Commendation. The One who addresses this church has eyes like flaming fire and feet like glowing bronze. Revelation 2:18-29. This language would have particular appeal in a city of foundries. It is as "the Son of God" that He speaks. This is the only place in all the book of Revelation where this title is used. During the Middle Ages the place of the Son of God was usurped by the son of perdition; the Man of Sorrows was replaced by the man of sin. As "the Son of God" Christ addresses this church.

Thyatira symbolizes the longest of the church periods—about 1,000 years. Beginning with the sixth century, it lasts through till the seventeenth century. B. Holzhauser, a Roman Catholic writer, says: "Thyatira is the middle church of the seven, and consequently stands as the symbol of the church of the Middle Ages."—*The Apocalypse*, page 158.

The believers, however, are commended for their works, especially the last works. "I know . . . that of late you have toiled harder than you did at first." Revelation 2:19, Weymouth.

A change came at the end of the Thyatiran period when the

great Reformation arose. Such men as Luther, Knox, Calvin, Zwingli, and scores of others came to lead the people back to God. See chart, page 29.

Reproof. This is the longest of the seven letters, and it contains the most definite denunciations. The reference to Jezebel is particularly significant. Chapter 2:20. Jezebel was a princess of Phoenicia. But when Ahab, king of Israel, married her, she then came into Israel as the queen. As a priestess of Baal, Jezebel set herself to introduce sun worship into Israel, and she succeeded. Almost the whole nation went into idolatry.

Then came Elijah the prophet, who was called of God to denounce the apostasy of Israel. His word locked the heavens, and he walked away with the key. The land suffered drought and famine. Three and a half years later Elijah led the people back to the true God. He destroyed the 850 prophets and priests of Baal. Jezebel and her wicked family were later destroyed by Jehu, the reformer.

This marriage of Ahab to Jezebel, and the subsequent apostasy of Israel, was a type of the time when paganism would come into the church and the head of the church become the head of the state. Sun worship, the foundation of pagan worship, came with all its trappings into the Christian church and is still perpetuated among certain groups. Red and purple were pronounced in the cloth trade of Thyatira, and these colors became a vital part of the attire of the apostate church. Revelation 17:4.

In A.D. 538 Emperor Justinian made effective a decree establishing the bishop of Rome "the corrector of heretics," thus giving him temporal and ecclesiastical authority over all the churches. For three and a half prophetic years, or 1260 literal years (A.D. 538-1798), this power was vested in the bishop of Rome. The Napoleonic wars stripped the Roman Church of her temporal power, but in recent decades she has been rapidly regaining her prestige. During the long centuries the church was suffering from a spiritual drought. God gave her opportunity to repent. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was God's appeal to His

people, but “*she repented not*” (chapter 2:21); that is, those symbolized by Jezebel refused to heed. The Counter Reformation was launched in opposition to the Protestant Reformation; thus the minds of many were blinded to God’s real message for that time.

Counsel. “Hold fast till I come” is the call of Christ to the church of this period. This is the first reference in these apocalyptic letters to the approaching second advent. This great doctrine had been largely set aside by the teachings of such men as Augustine, whose interpretation of Scripture undermined the basic truth of the resurrection. Those scriptures which teach so emphatically the resurrection of the body at the return of Christ were interpreted as applying to the resurrection of dead souls to spiritual life. Moreover, the promise of the establishment of the City of God, the New Jerusalem, on the renewed earth was declared to predict the establishment of the church as the ruling power among the nations, making the second advent of little importance.

Promise. To the overcomer, Christ promised “power” or “authority” over the nations; a heartening promise indeed in the face of the persecution of those days. The martyrs were looked upon as powerless and insignificant, and so they were by comparison with the pomp and power of the Holy Roman Empire. But the promise is that they will yet reign with Christ in His coming kingdom, and will then have “power over the nations.” Verse 26.

But there was another promise: “I will give him the Morning Star.” Verse 28. As the daystar, or morning star, appears in a dark hour of the night, so Christ, “the Daystar” (2 Peter 1:19), or “the bright and morning Star” (Revelation 22:16), promises to appear in the hour of our greatest trial. At the time the church was passing through her darkest hour of apostasy, the Spirit of Christ inspired God-fearing men like Wycliffe, Huss, and others, who led the people back to the word of God. They were heralds of the coming day of Reformation. In fact, Wycliffe is sometimes called the “Morning Star of the Reformation.”

The Epistle to Sardis, Revelation 3:1-6

Meaning and Significance of the Name. Sardis means "that which remains," or "the escape of the remnant." Actually there was little real faith remaining after the centuries of apostasy and persecution. But a remnant escaped, as it were, and started out on a career of fresh spiritual life. But the new life which had begun with such promise soon became enfeebled and was ready to die.

Characteristic of the City. It is significant that W. M. Ramsay speaks of Sardis as "The City of Death." In every way, it was a contrast with Smyrna, "The City of Life." Ramsay's comment is significant: "Smyrna was dead, and yet lived. Sardis lived, and yet was dead."—*The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*, page 375. "The letter to the Sardian church breathes the spirit of death, of appearance without reality, promise without performance, outward show of strength betrayed by want of watchfulness and careless confidence."—*Ibid.*, p. 44.

The city of Sardis grew into power about 1150 B.C. Built upon a crumbling rock, it stood at an elevation of 1,500 feet. It later became the capital of the kingdom of Lydia, one of the richest kingdoms of the ancient world. Coined money is believed to have originated there.

The almost perpendicular walls of the elevation on which this city stood made it appear impregnable. There was only one entrance into the city, and this could easily be guarded. Because of overconfidence, however, during the reign of Croesus the city of Sardis was captured by Cyrus, 549 B.C. One of Cyrus's soldiers scaled the rock on a dark night when the guards were not watching. Entering the city, he opened the gates to the Persians. The same thing was repeated in the days of Antiochus the Great, 213 B.C.

"The sudden ruin of that great empire and the wealthiest king of all the world was an event of that character which most impressed the Greek mind, emphasizing a moral lesson by a great

national disaster. A little carelessness was shown; a watchman was wanting at the necessary point, or a sentinel slept at his post for an hour; and the greatest power on the earth was hurled to destruction. The great king trusted to Sardis, and Sardis failed him at the critical moment.”—*Ibid.*, p. 377.

The surrounding country was a favorite haunt for thieves. The city had little or no influence in the Roman period. Its glory was all in the past. Dana describes it as a typical example of broken-down aristocracy. And that is the impression any student gets who visits this site today. As we wandered over its grass-grown streets we said, “Can it be that this was the great capital of Lydia, the headquarters of Croesus?” How short-lived is human greatness! Here were tombs of forgotten monarchs and temple ruins of dead religions. As we watched the sunrise over the gaping wall, a feeling of desolation crept over us. Mighty pillars of marble jutted up into the sky, casting strange shadows over what had been the banquet hall of royalty. A few goats were the only inhabitants of a city that at one time had been the envy of Cyrus the Great. Sardis, the city that once was alive but now is dead.

Commendation. There seemed little indeed to commend. When John wrote in A.D. 95, Sardis was living mostly on its past reputation. The few things that were alive seemed ready to die. Their outward activity was not backed up by an inner spirituality. What they had received and heard they had not remembered and held. Yet there were a few even in Sardis who had not defiled their garments.

Reproof. “Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” Revelation 3:1. Like the city itself, the Sardis church had begun with great promise, but its pretensions were unjustified. No church and no individual Christian can live upon a past reputation, no matter how wonderful it may have been.

Counsel. “Be watchful. . . . And repent.” How impressive are these words in the light of the city’s history! A Christian dare not be overconfident. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

"With every conceivable artifice and device he [Satan] is seeking to take souls captive. Unless we are constantly on guard we shall fall an easy prey to his unnumbered deceptions. . . . Many today are asleep, as were the disciples. They are not watching and praying lest they enter into temptation. Let us read and study those portions of God's word that have special reference to these last days, pointing out the dangers that will threaten God's people."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 100, 101.

Applying this message to the post-Reformation period, it fits exactly. Those who led out in the Reformation were men of vigor and consecration, but their followers, thinking that the battles had been won, settled down to organized religion. Great movements begun by men like Luther and Knox became mere state religions, supported by the public treasury. Self-sufficient and satisfied with past attainments, these people failed to sense the need of the great heathen world. Matthew Arnold's descriptive verse gives a true picture:

Its form stood still without a breach,
When life and warmth were fled,
And still it spoke its wonted speech,
But every word was dead.

Forms are all right, providing they are filled with power; but too often forms become mere formality and dead works. "Hold fast, and repent," pleads the Lord. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." Revelation 3:3. When Christ returns in glory, He will come as a thief in the night. The world, and even many professed Christians, will be unprepared for that glorious event. It will come as an overwhelming surprise to millions.

But God had not forsaken His people, even in the Sardis period. Some of the greatest events of history were happening at that time. Cromwell's revolution in England overthrew the false idea of "the divine right of kings." At the same time, the American Colonies were being established, and these became the

foundation of a new nation and a new civilization. New opportunities were thus opening before the church.

Promise. To the faithful remnant in Sardis, God said: "They shall walk with Me in white." White is the symbol of purity and righteousness. Revelation 19:8; Zechariah 3:3-5. The white toga in Rome symbolized triumph and joy, and was worn by candidates for high office. Black, a symbol of mourning or defeat, was worn by slaves and captives.

One of the most beautiful promises in God's word is found in Revelation 3:5: "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." How wonderful to know that even if our names are blotted from the record books of man and for the sake of the gospel we are disowned by friends and family, yet in heaven our High Priest claims us as His own and confesses our names before His Father! Honor and security are ours, and we can look confidently into the future, knowing that soon our Lord will come and receive us unto Himself. In that great day this will be the command that goes forth: "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." Isaiah 26:2.

Christ's Epistles to Philadelphia and Laodicea

PHILADELPHIA means "brotherly love." The city derived its name from Attalus II, whose loyalty to his brother Eumenes won for him the epithet Philadelphus. The city was founded about 150 B.C.

Characteristic of Philadelphia. W. M. Ramsay calls it a "missionary city," giving the word a little different meaning perhaps from what we usually think of as "missionary" today. He says, "The intention of its founder was to make it a center of the Greco-Asiatic civilization and a means of spreading the Greek language and manners in the eastern parts of Lydia and in Phrygia. It was a missionary city from the beginning, founded to promote a certain unity of spirit, customs, and loyalty within the realm, the apostle of Hellenism in an Oriental land. It was a successful teacher. Before A.D. 19 the Lydian tongue had ceased to be spoken in Lydia, and Greek was the only language of the country."—*The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*, pages 391, 392.

Philadelphia was located at the entrance to the beautiful valley of Hermus, and was, as it were, the key or gateway to this fertile area. The message of Christ, therefore, had special significance. Verses 7, 8. Because of its magnificence, Philadelphia was sometimes referred to as "Little Athens." But it was subject

to frequent earthquakes, and the populace “lived always in the dread of disaster.” It was almost totally destroyed A.D. 17. Most of its citizens fled from the city, and many never returned. Others lived for weeks and months in tents and temporary dwellings. Amid the wreckage stood a lone column; it was still standing in the eighteenth century. The citizens rebuilt the city, however, Tiberius Caesar donating quite a large sum from his personal treasury. In his honor they renamed the city Neo-Caesarus. In fact, the city has changed its name several times. Under the reign of Caracalla it was called Neokorus, and later changed to Flavia. Today its Turkish name is Alaşehir, meaning “The Reddish City” or “The City of God.” Its present population is about 15,000. At this writing not one Christian lives there.

The Epistle to Philadelphia, Revelation 3:7-13

Commendation. As in His message to Smyrna, Christ commends the believers in Philadelphia for meeting the approval of the Holy One. By contrast, how different was His message to Sardis! People of that church had a name that they were living, but were spiritually dead! But the Philadelphian church had kept His word and had not denied His name.

Reproof. It is significant that Christ gave no reproof to this church. Its name was a beautiful symbol of the affection which characterized the believers.

Counsel. Philadelphia represents that period in church history which was ushered in by the evangelical preaching of the Wesleys, Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and a multitude of others. “The world is my parish,” declared John Wesley, whose message of “free grace” challenged the Calvinistic theology of “election.” This evangelical movement became the prelude to the era of modern missions that came with the dawn of the eighteenth century. To the church of this period the Lord said significantly: “I have set before thee an open door.” Verse 8. Providence opened the door to missionary endeavor in practically every land of earth. “A great door and effectual is opened unto me,” said Paul.

Two great political revolutions, one in America, 1776, the other in France, 1789, affected tremendously the thinking of the world. Then suddenly the world began to open up for the gospel. William Carey went to India in 1793; Robert Morrison to China in 1807; Robert Moffat to Africa in 1817, followed by David Livingstone in 1841. The British and Foreign Bible Society began its work in 1804, and the American Bible Society came into being in 1816. The Sunday-school movement also began around this time.

These were the beginnings of a great missionary program which was to carry "the everlasting gospel" to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Revelation 14:6, 7. The Philadelphia period culminated in the great second-advent awakening of the nineteenth century. Through the study of Daniel and the Revelation, and the interpretation of Christ's own prophecy, a profound conviction came to Christendom that the return of Christ was at hand. The remarkable dark day of May 19, 1780, and the phenomenal falling of the stars in 1833, were recognized as a direct fulfillment of prophecy and as omens of the Saviour's imminent appearing. A new impetus was given to the study of prophecy. The prophetic periods of the 1260 days, as relating to the antichrist, and the 2300 days, which relate to the message of the judgment, received particular attention. Prophetic conferences convened, and these gave impetus to one of the greatest eras of preaching since the days of the apostles. Side by side with the revival in the study of the prophecies came an advance in scientific investigation. This was followed by an era of invention, and the world seemed suddenly to leap forward, first on wheels, then on wings. New methods of transportation and communication came into being to make possible the carrying of the gospel to all the world in this generation.

The word Philadelphia means "brotherly love," and the Philadelphian period was characterized by just such an experience among God's people. "Love for the Elder Brother always leads to love for the other brothers. This is the love that was lost dur-

ing the Ephesian period. . . . Its return to the church will bring a repetition of Pentecostal power.”—Taylor G. Bunch, *The Seven Epistles of Christ*, page 198. God’s work will close in the power of His Spirit, which is the power of divine love. And when the gospel has gone to all the world, the end will come (Matthew 24:14) and our Lord will appear in glory (Matthew 25:31). To this church came the message: “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take [or cheat thee of] thy crown.” Revelation 3:11. It is as if God said, “Let no man, or business, or property, or ambition, or anxiety deprive you of your crown.” See Colossians 2:18.

Promise. The keynote of the Revelation is the second advent, and in this epistle Christ promises that the faithful who endure will be kept in the hour of universal trial which shall come upon the whole world. Revelation 3:10. But more: those who ridiculed them and disowned them will come at last to recognize the truth of the message that caused their separation, and they will know that God loves them. Verse 9.

Mention has already been made of the pillar or column which withstood the devastating earthquake in A.D. 17 and remained through the centuries like a sentinel amid the ruins. It could well symbolize the overcomer. Christ promises to make him “a pillar” in the temple of God and to write upon him His “new name.” We bear the name of God who owns us and the name of the New Jerusalem, our destination.

Some years ago when the political relationships between Hungary and Rumania were very strained and all nationals of either country residing in the other were compelled to return to their homeland, a little girl four years old, who had been staying with relatives, was to be returned on the train to her home in Hungary. No one, however, was permitted to accompany her; she had to travel alone. But how could she? Well, love always finds a way. They labeled her and put her in the baggage car. Her picture, showing the label both back and front, appeared in the London papers. She traveled with the baggage, crossed the border line

between the countries, and arrived in safety. Her mother met her. Imagine the eager anticipation of that mother and the joy of the little one as the train pulled into the home station! Just so, our Lord awaits our homecoming. We may not always have a first-class seat; we may even have to travel, as it were, with the baggage. But what does it matter? We are on our way home! We are labeled for the New Jerusalem! Christ's name is inscribed on our hearts. We are members of the family of God.

The Epistle to Laodicea, Revelation 3:14-22

Meaning and Significance of the Name. Laodicea means "judging of the people." This city was built by Antiochus II, 261-246 B.C., and was named in honor of his wife, Laodice, reference to whom is found in Daniel 11:6. This is the last of the seven churches, and it significantly covers that period of church history when our heavenly High Priest will be carrying out His ministry of judgment just prior to His return in glory. The name might also be interpreted "a just people," or "a justified people." Only as our Advocate represents us at the throne of grace can we be justified. We are justified by His grace (Romans 3:24), by His blood (Romans 5:9), and by faith (Romans 5:1). Grace is the source; blood is the means; faith is the method by which we appropriate it. We show it by *works*. James 2:22, 24. Good works can never produce justification; but justification is revealed by good works.

Characteristic of the City. Laodicea could well be called "City of Compromise." "There is no city whose spirit and nature are more difficult to describe than Laodicea. There are no extremes, and hardly any very strongly marked features. But in this even balance lies its peculiar character. Those were the qualities that contributed to make it essentially the successful trading city, the city of bankers and finance, which could adapt itself to the needs and wishes of others, ever pliable and accommodating, full of the spirit of compromise."—W. M. Ramsay, *op. cit.*, pp. 422, 423.

Situated about fifty miles from Philadelphia and about six

miles from Colossae, it stood at the junction of two important roads. It was a city of wealth, with large markets, a large banking exchange, and large manufacturing interests. A rich farming district surrounded it. Valuable wool was produced in the valley, soft in texture, glossy black in color, but tinged as it were with violet. Black garments were worn almost exclusively by the Laodiceans as evidence of their wealth. This wool is no longer produced.

Laodicea was one of the leading health resorts in the Greco-Roman Empire. Lukewarm baths and mineral springs attracted many visitors from Europe and Asia. An important school of medicine was situated in the temple of Karu, one of some two hundred temples in the ancient world dedicated to Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine, or a counterfeit messiah. Connected with this school was an industry for the manufacture of a special eye medicine, collyrium. It was made from the famous Phrygian stone. W. M. Ramsay says: "This Phrygian powder came through Laodicea into general use among the Greeks."—*Op. cit.*, p. 419. Because of their wealth, the citizens were proud, arrogant, and self-satisfied. The city itself was well-ordered and successful, but those very features made it self-sufficient.

Paul evidently wrote an epistle to Laodicea (see Colossians 4: 13, 16), but his letter has been lost and is not now a part of the New Testament. Some scholars believe that this might refer to the Ephesian epistle, for it was to be read in all the churches. However, it probably was a special letter, for, according to our records, Paul never visited this church in person.

An important church council, known as the Council of Laodicea, was later held in this city. This convened about the middle of the fourth century with thirty-two bishops in attendance, and one of the special items on the agenda concerned the canon of Scripture, or the cataloguing of the books of the Bible. It is interesting to note that this particular council seems to have omitted the entire book of Revelation from the canon. But the extant records of this council are challenged by scholarship.

We have now arrived at the terminal point of our journey, having traveled from Ephesus to Laodicea. This is Christ's last message to the churches, and He speaks as "the Amen" and "the faithful and true Witness." He has a right to speak at the close of human history, for He was also "the beginning" in the original creation. Revelation 3:14. Weymouth's translation (third edition) reads, "The Beginning and Lord of God's Creation." He was the One who "spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:9. As the "Word," or the "Logos" (Greek), He was *with* God, and He *was* God. Christ was not part of the creation, for He was the Creator. John 1:1-3. See also Colossians 1:13-16; Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8:6.

Not only was He the Author of the original creation; He is also "the Author and Finisher of our faith." Hebrews 12:2. As such, He speaks to a Christianized generation, cultured and educated, but skeptical and self-complacent, having lost its God in the theories of "science falsely so called." 1 Timothy 6:20. The evolutionary philosophy, studied from any angle, must be recognized as an attack on the veracity of God's word. Its one great aim seems to be to destroy faith in the Creator. If man has been growing gradually better and never had a fall through sin, then he does not need a Saviour. Evolution and true Christianity can never be harmonized. They begin at two different points; they travel in two different directions; and they end at terminals as wide apart as the poles. This will be developed in the comments on chapter 7.

Commendation. There was nothing to commend in Laodicea, for this church had imbibed the proud spirit of the world around it, and its people were in spiritual jeopardy. This called forth the Lord's clear rebuke. "Thou art lukewarm," He says.

Reproof. Christ sees this last church as miserable and poor and blind and naked; yet, interestingly, they possessed all the essentials that go to make an impressive appearance. They are orthodox, to be sure, but orthodoxy of itself is insufficient; it is dead. One can

be sound in theology, yet sound asleep. It is impossible to be an earnest, glowing Christian without the fire of the faith of Jesus. The lukewarm baths of Laodicea, "neither cold nor hot," were a tragic symbol of professing Christians just prior to the return of Christ. He does not charge them with being hypocrites, for a hypocrite is an imposter or a pretender; he knows better. But here is a church of which the Lord says, Thou "knowest not." They possess all the outward evidence of cultural attainment, yet they are actually wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. "Increased with goods," they are wealthy as measured by the world's standards, possessing beautiful church buildings, wonderful institutions, and centers of learning, yet lacking the very essentials of Christian experience. When worldliness eats its way into our hearts, it destroys our passion for souls. All too many of us are comfortable and self-satisfied, yet we know not our real condition; we are inoculated with just enough Christianity to make us immune to the genuine thing. Could anything be more tragic? And this condition prevails at the very time when our Lord is about to return.

Counsel. But despite all this, the Saviour has not forsaken His people. He says, "Buy of Me gold tried in the fire" (see Job 23:10), and "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed" (see Isaiah 61:10; Revelation 19:8). Christ's parable of the man who lacked a wedding garment (Matthew 22) is a true picture of this last church. "Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see," says the Lord. Compare Ephesians 1:18; John 16:13. When we cease to trust ourselves, and recognize our poverty, when we seek for the riches of heaven, only then can we be ready for His appearing. We are blind, but not incurably blind. We need to be healed; but look! the Great Physician waits to help us. We need to be clothed, and He is waiting to cover us with His own robe of righteousness. No garment woven on the looms of earth can meet our need. The black garments of the Laodiceans, which to them were evidences of their superiority, were in reality an evidence of their spiritual poverty. In the Greco-Roman world,

black was generally recognized as a symbol of subjection. In medieval times, groups in certain countries were compelled to wear black to show their subjection. But white is a symbol of purity and victory. God wants us to be *pure*, that we may be *victorious*. He appeals to us in tenderness and love, saying, "I counsel thee."

"When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 323, 324.

The righteousness by which we are *justified* is *imputed*; that is, we had no part in it whatsoever. It comes wholly from God. But the righteousness by which we are *sanctified* is *imparted*; that is, it is worked out in our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"The first is *our title to heaven*; the second is *our fitness for heaven*."—Ellen G. White, in *The Review and Herald*, June 4, 1895.

Promise. The Lord rebukes those whom He loves, but if we refuse His rebuke, then we must be separated from Him. It is not sufficient to accept His pardon—we must accept His provision. At the door of every heart He stands and knocks, and knocks again. He appeals to us to let Him in. Not only does He knock, but He calls to us: "If any man hear My voice—" It is not the person inside that is taking the initiative, but the Lord who is outside stands there pressing against the door, pleading for entrance. He has come from the throne of heaven that He might dine with the sons of men. And it makes no difference who we are or what is our condition. "If any man . . . open the door," He says, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Verse 20. Salvation is always a personal matter. As individuals, we

must heed His voice and let Him in. Not only will He sup with us; He will share His throne with us. This is surely the most profound promise in the Bible.

It is a beautiful picture and reveals the intimate fellowship the believer may have with his risen Lord. The act of dining together creates a bond of fellowship between two persons. This is particularly true in the Orient. Sharing a meal is a symbol of friendship, the host furnishing not only the meal, but, greater still, the freedom of his home. As we open our heart's door to Christ we thereby invite Him to share our innermost lives.

O Jesus! Thou art standing
 Outside the fast-closed door,
 In lowly patience waiting
 To pass the threshold o'er:
 We bear the name of Christians,
 Thy name and sign we bear:
 Oh, shame, thrice shame upon us!
 To keep Thee standing there.

O Jesus! Thou art knocking;
 And lo! that hand is scarred,
 And thorns Thy brow encircle,
 And tears Thy face have marred:
 O love that passeth knowledge,
 So patiently to wait!
 O sin that hath no equal,
 So fast to bar the gate!

O Jesus! Thou art pleading
 In accents meek and low—
 “I died for you, My children,
 And will ye treat Me so?”
 O Lord, with shame and sorrow
 We open now the door;
 Dear Saviour, enter, enter,
 And leave us nevermore!

—William W. How.

In concluding the study of these seven epistles of Christ to His church we should note the scope of His promises to the over-

comer. Sin brought Adam not only the loss of life, but also the loss of his Eden home. But greater still, it robbed him of the companionship of God. The opening chapters of Genesis tell us the story of man's failure and loss through sin. The closing chapters of Revelation tell of man's victory and full restoration through Christ. Everything lost through sin will be restored through grace. Note these contrasts in Genesis and Revelation:

SIN

Sin deprived us of the tree of life. Genesis 3:22, 23.

Sin put us under death sentence. 2:17.

Sin sent us out to earn our bread. 3:19.

Sin stole our dominion. 3:24.

Sin left us naked. 3:7.

Sin drove us from God's presence. 3:23.

Sin returned us to dust. 3:19.

GRACE

Grace restores tree of life. Revelation 2:7.

Grace gives victory over second death. 2:11.

Grace provides hidden manna. 2:17.

Grace promises power over nations. 2:26.

Grace clothes us in white raiment. 3:5.

Grace pledges we go out no more. 3:12.

Grace places us on throne of God. 3:21.

Marvelous heritage for sinners saved by grace! When the seventh trumpet sounds and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord, that settles forever the question of the ownership of this world. On Calvary He defeated the devil and reconciled the world to God. But this will be the signal for the expulsion of Satan, the great deceiver and usurper. The rightful ownership of Christ will have been fully determined in the great judgment scenes of heaven. This we will study in succeeding chapters. Wisdom, worthiness, wealth, and worship belong to Him! "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The Vision of the Throne; The Lamb and the Sealed Book

NOW begins the real pageant of the Apocalypse. What has been presented hitherto has been but an introduction. The whole objective of these prophecies is to reveal the justice of God and to show how His character will be vindicated before the universe. Our comprehension of these themes will be greatly aided if we permit ourselves to think of John as being carried forward to the time when the judgment of God begins. Chapter 4 opens with the invitation for him to "come up hither" that he might behold things which "must be hereafter." In vision he enters the sanctuary of God, and from the throne room of the Eternal he witnesses the portrayal of the great judgment scenes, when the cases of all are decided. These events in the moving drama of redemption fill him with awe. Paul says God "hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained." Acts 17:31. And again: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:10.

A Door Opened in Heaven

The earthly sanctuary built by Moses contained two apartments. These were called the "holy place" and the "most holy place." No one entered the "most holy place" except the high

priest, and then only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. Throughout all their history the Hebrews have understood the Day of Atonement to prefigure the day of judgment when the cases of all will be decided. The earthly sanctuary was a type of the heavenly (see Hebrews 9), and in vision John saw "a door . . . opened in heaven;" not *into* heaven, but *in* heaven. It was the opening of an inner door in the heavenly sanctuary. He was taken in vision to behold the solemn scenes of the judgment when the High Priest performs His closing work of ministry.

A voice spoke and said, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter." Revelation 4:1. The prophet responds, and the first thing he sees is a throne. There is a striking similarity between John's description in Revelation 4 and Daniel's description in Daniel 7:9-14. Both prophets were looking at the same scene. Each pictures "the thrones" or "seats" set in order around the central throne, and both Daniel and John attempt to describe the One occupying that throne. Daniel says His "garment was white as snow." John says He was "like a jasper," or more accurately, "like a diamond." Daniel says, "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him." John says He was like "a sardine stone" or the sardius, a brilliant red stone. The dazzling white of the jasper or diamond could well represent His holiness, while the fiery stream or the blood red of the sardius could symbolize His righteousness. (See Appendix, page 214, No. 1.)

The throne itself was like "an emerald." Green, being the living color, well expresses the mercy of God, while the "rainbow round about the throne" is a beautiful symbol of hope. When the rainbow first appeared, it was a sign of God's everlasting covenant of peace. Genesis 9. But there could be no rainbow without the shower; it is the mingling of the sunshine and the shower that produces it. So the rainbow-encircled throne is where God's mercy and His justice meet and mingle. At the throne of grace "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. The throne John and Daniel described is not the "throne of glory" (Matthew 25:31 and

Revelation 20:11). No, dear reader, it is “the throne of grace” where you and I can come for mercy and pardon from sin. Hebrews 4:16.

But the greatest comfort and the first guarantee of victory is the fact that God is on His throne. He has not abdicated in favor of any other power. No earthly dictatorship can overthrow the Occupant of that throne.

The word “seat” is the Greek *thronos*, from which we get our word “throne.” These seats were seats of honor, or thrones, on which the twenty-four elders were sitting. Daniel says the thrones were “cast down” or “placed.” Daniel 7:9. The custom in those days, when an assize was to be held, was for one to throw down or place cushions on which the dignitaries would lean during the court session. These elders, like the priests of ancient Israel, were clothed in white raiment, a symbol of “the righteousness of saints.” Revelation 19:8. Ministering as they do in the Melchizedek order, they are therefore crowned as king-priests.

But who are these elders? From whence did they come? They themselves declare they were redeemed from the earth. Chapter 5:9. They are, therefore, sinners saved by grace. A priest had to be chosen from among his brethren. Hebrews 2:17. These men, being priests, were the chosen representatives from every race and nation of the world. When Christ arose from the grave, “many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves.” Matthew 27:52, 53. Then “when He ascended up on high, He led a multitude of captives.” Ephesians 4:8, margin. It was in this sense that He became “the first-born among many brethren.” Romans 8:29. When He was installed as our High Priest, He was anointed with the oil of gladness *above his fellows*. Hebrews 1:9. Those “fellows” were not angels; they were men. They were His “brethren” who arose with Him from the grave. They were the antitypical wave-sheaf offering, as it were, and became the antitype of the ceremonial in the Mosaic ritual. Leviticus 23:15. Christ is our First Fruits (1 Corinthians 15:20), and He arose on the very day of the first-fruit offering. Jesus died on

the fourteenth day of Nisan, the first month, and He arose on the sixteenth day, exactly fulfilling the type.

Twenty-four priests appear with Christ in His priestly ministry. This, too, is a fulfillment of the type. In the temple service there were twenty-four courses of the Levitical priesthood. See 1 Chronicles 24:3-19; 2 Chronicles 8:14.

The "Seven Lamps of Fire"

These lamps are declared to be the “seven Spirits of God,” seven being the figure of completeness or perfection. This is a beautiful picture of the Holy Spirit searching constantly throughout the whole world for those whose hearts are perfect toward Him. 2 Chronicles 16:9; Proverbs 15:3.

The "Living Creatures" About the Throne, Revelation 4:4

The “four beasts,” or “living creatures,” as other translators render the Greek word *zoon*, seem to be more intimately connected with the throne than even the twenty-four elders. The symbolism of a lion, a calf, a man, and a flying eagle is particularly significant. Similar imagery is found also in the first chapter of Ezekiel. These, doubtless, denote strength, perseverance, intelligence, and swiftness. Commentators for centuries have linked these symbols with the four aspects of our Saviour as emphasized particularly in the four Gospels. Matthew writes on the kingly side of our Lord, emphasizing the King and His kingdom. This is well symbolized by the lion, the majestic king of beasts. Mark deals largely with the Saviour as the servant of man, the ox symbolizing service. Luke, the physician, reveals His human aspect as the Son of man, hence the face of a man. John emphasizes His deity—Christ the Eternal Word—who created all things. This phase of our Lord is symbolized by the flying eagle.

Though the account of the organization of Israel in the wilderness as given in Numbers 2 does not so state, non-Biblical records indicate that these symbols were used as follows: the section grouped around Judah were under the lion standard; those stand-

ing near Ephraim, under the ox; those around Reuben, under the standard of a man; and those around Dan, under the flying eagle.

The scene that is about to open is one of the great climaxes in the apocalyptic story. The tremendous sweep of events here introduced leaves one awestruck with wonder as he tries to catch their true significance.

The Book With the Binding Seals

The One who occupies the throne has a book in His hand, sealed with seven seals. Whatever this book is, it concerns the redemption of men, for as soon as it is taken from the hand of the Occupant of the throne, a paean of praise breaks forth as the elders cry in rapturous exaltation, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" "and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." Yes, it has everything to do with our redemption. And that is why the study of this book is so important.

While redemption has its roots in the past, its full realization lies in the future. The price of our redemption was paid when our Lord shed His precious blood on Calvary's cross. But not until He comes the second time in power and glory is redemption complete. This world, so long under the sway of the powers of evil, is to be repossessed and given back to the people of God. "Blessed are the meek," said Jesus, "for they shall inherit the earth." That inheritance is still future. Looking forward to that hour of victory, He told us to be ready and outlined many signs which locate the time of His appearing. "When these things begin to come to pass," He said, "then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28.

The apostle Paul spoke about the inheritance as a future hope. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the earnest, or pledge, of that inheritance, which is "the redemption of the purchased possession." Ephesians 1:13, 14. While the inheritance is pledged, yet it has to be repossessed from its usurper and made ready for its eternal citizens. That cannot be accomplished until after the judgment.

Under the ancient laws and customs of the Hebrews it was

impossible to alienate estates beyond a certain time. If one found it necessary through misfortune to dispose of his land, the new ownership continued only until the year of jubilee, when each property automatically came back to its original owner or his heirs. In fact, an owner or heir did not even have to wait until the jubilee, providing he could establish legal claim to the property and could pay the redemption price.

At the time of forfeiture of the property a legal document was executed in duplicate, specifying the terms, so that the proper authorities would have a basis for adjudicating a redemption before the year of jubilee.

"For the manner of writing the contract, he who was to buy the ground wrote two instruments [documents]; the one to be sealed with his own signet, the other he showed unclosed to the witnesses, that they might subscribe and bear witness of that which was written. *This, the witnesses did subscribe UPON THE BACK of the enclosed instrument.—Weemse on the Judicial Law of Moses*, chapter 30. Quoted by J. A. Seiss in *The Apocalypse*, vol. 1, p. 273.

The one who had possession of an alienated or forfeited property thus was always liable for the return of it, according to the terms of the agreement. But the repossession or redemption could be negotiated only by a "goel," the nearest of kin. The story of Ruth involves such a transaction; however, in that instance the nearest of kin deferred to Boaz, who was next of kin. In Jeremiah 32 there is an account of a redemption of property involving the sealed and unsealed books of purchase, and the witnesses.

Now let us catch the significance of this heavenly scene. When Adam sinned he forfeited all rights to this world. And the inheritance passed not only out of his hands but out of the hands of all his posterity. Satan claimed this world, and for all these thousands of years strangers and intruders have overrun and debased it. Yet all the while those title deeds have been awaiting the time when the Redeemer or the Goel would take that sealed book and repossess the lost inheritance.

Before the enemy and his seed can be evicted and the rightful heirs reinstated, there must be a thorough investigation of all the rights and claims. This calls for the opening of the books in heaven. These must be searched before pronouncement can be made. Before our Lord returns in power and glory to receive His church, every case will have been decided, for He brings His rewards with Him, to give to "every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12. Before He comes as King He terminates His work as Priest as He pronounces eternal sentence on the whole human race in these words: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Verse 11.

In every judgment there are three phases: (1) the investigation of the evidence, (2) the decision and pronouncement of sentence, (3) the execution of the sentence. In the great assize in heaven these same three phases are evident. The execution of the sentence is not the whole judgment. Before that can be carried into effect there must be the pronouncement of the sentence. Before that there must be an examination or investigation of every case. This takes place not because God needs the evidence, for He is God and knows all things, but that the whole universe may know the justice of the sentence and God's name may be vindicated.

The apostle Paul says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:10. He furthermore declares that Christ shall judge the secrets of men. Romans 2:16. And again: God "hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained." Acts 17:31. And the appointment of that ordained Man is assured by the fact that "He hath raised Him from the dead." This Man, who can be none other than Christ Himself, declares, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." "And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." John 5:22, 27.

These words of Jesus emphasize two of the phases of the judg-

ment, namely, that which brings into review the record of every life, and, second, that which follows when the sentence of judgment is carried into effect. Note these strong statements:

“Christ has been made our Judge. The Father is not the Judge. The angels are not. He who took humanity upon Himself, and in this world lived a perfect life, is to judge us. He only can be our Judge. Will you remember this, brethren? Will you remember it, ministers? Will you remember it, fathers and mothers? Christ took humanity that He might be our Judge.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 185.

“He who has given the light, He who has followed the soul with tenderest entreaty, seeking to win it from sin to holiness, is in one its advocate and judge. . . . It is He who has encountered the deceiver, and who through all the ages has been seeking to wrest the captives from his grasp, who will pass judgment upon every soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 210.

“Christ Himself will decide who are worthy to dwell with the family of heaven. He will judge every man according to his words and his works.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 74.

“The Ancient of Days is God the Father. . . . It is He, the source of all being, and the fountain of all law, that is to *preside* in the judgment. . . . Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies, and there appears in the presence of God, to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man,—to *perform* the work of investigative judgment.”—*The Great Controversy*, pages 479, 480. Italics supplied.

Why is Christ our appointed Judge? We quote His own words: “Because He is the Son of man.”

“Because He has tasted the very dregs of human affliction and temptation, and understands the frailties and sins of men; because in our behalf He has victoriously withstood the temptations of Satan, and will deal justly and tenderly with the souls that His own blood has been poured out to save,—because of this, the Son of man is appointed to execute the judgment.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 210. (See Appendix, page 214, No. 2.)

Among ancient Israel's annual feasts two were particularly important, i.e., the Passover and the Day of Atonement. (See page 85.) The first came in the spring; the second in the autumn. These represented vital phases in the work of Christ. Paul says, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." 1 Corinthians 5:7. He rose from the tomb to become our High Priest in heaven, where He ministers the virtues of His sacrifice, making effective by His Spirit *in* us what He did *for* us on the cross. That ministry reaches its climax in a work of judgment. This was prefigured by the services of the great Day of Atonement. Coming just at the time of harvest, it typified the great pre-advent judgment in heaven just before our Lord comes to reap the harvest of the earth. We are now living in the antitypical day of atonement, when our Lord climaxes His intercessory ministry in heaven.

With these thoughts as a background let us visualize the scene in heaven as it is outlined in the Revelation, chapters 4 and 5.

The Ancient of Days, seated upon the rainbow-encircled throne, is presiding over that mighty assembly. The majesty of that scene is beyond words. Close to the great throne are the four living ones, and around them are the four and twenty elders, occupying seats or lesser thrones. In the hand of the Almighty is a book. It is written on the inside and also on the "the back side," or the outside. A might angel steps forward and challenges the universe. "Who is worthy to open the book," he cries, "and to loose the seals thereof?"

In the light of what we have already noticed concerning lost inheritances, such an announcement has tremendous significance, for the destiny of this lost world seems to hang in the balance. All heaven is silent. Will no one reach forth and take the book? The suspense is awful. John's tender heart is moved to tears. He weeps, but not because he is impatient to see inside the book. His tears are not those of disappointed curiosity. This disciplined and saintly soldier of the cross knows the significance of that sealed book. If no one is found worthy to open the book and to

break its binding seals, then all the promises of the prophets, all the hopes of the suffering people of God, all the messages of apostles and evangelists have been in vain. If no goel appears, then the purchased possession must go by default. The sons of the lost race can never inherit the earth. The thought is overwhelming.

Then one of the elders comes and speaks to the prophet. He says, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, . . . hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals." Drying his eyes, he looks, and lo! in the midst of the throne area is a Lamb, but not in unblemished beauty and innocence: it is as if in the very act of being slain. The Lamb reaches forth and takes the book from the hand of Him that sits upon the throne. As He does, a thrill of joy sweeps through the whole universe, and the heavenly host bursts forth into praise. There stands the Goel. A Redeemer has been found; the redemption of the purchased possession is assured.

As He steps forth to lift the title deeds of the alienated inheritance, the prophet notices some prominent features. He is a Lamb, but withal a Lion-Lamb. Thus the sacrificial virtue is prominent. But He has seven horns. These denote His strength. His eyes emphasize intelligence and wisdom. Seven being the number of perfection, He is therefore the symbol of perfect strength and perfect wisdom. Twenty-eight times in this book He is called the Lamb. But the symbols in this scene link us with other prophetic utterances. Habakkuk describes Him as having "horns coming out of His hand," or "bright beams out of His side" (margin), "and there was the hiding of His power." Habakkuk 3:4. He was wounded in His feet that He might atone for sins of walk; He was wounded in His hands that He might atone for sins of deed; He was wounded in His head that He might atone for sins of thought; and in His side, that He might atone for sins of unholy affection.

His hands alone are worthy to break the binding seals of that book. The destiny of men and nations is in the nail-pierced

hands of the Lamb that was slain. Moreover, every revelation we get of God comes to us through the Man of the cross. All we know of the future comes to us through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. (See Appendix, page 215, No. 3.)

The New Song Before the Throne, Revelation 5:9-13

As the Lamb takes the book, the living ones and the elders in adoration and praise raise the anthem, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." In chapter 4:8-11 a similar song was heard, but it was praise to Him who, as Creator of all things, is seated upon the throne. But in chapter 5 we hear that same group of heavenly beings singing "a new song." It, too, is a song of praise, but it is addressed especially to the Lamb as He lifts the book from the hands of the Almighty. They sense what this means. The centuries of sorrow are about to come to an end, for He who has paid the purchase price—the heavenly Goel—is now entering upon the final phase of His mediation for lost men; the judgment is about to begin. (See Appendix, page 215, No. 4.)

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," "and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood," is the anthem that bursts from redeemed lips. But something else arrests our attention—the four and twenty elders are seen with golden bowls full of incense "which are the prayers of saints." Why this reference to prayers here? Could it be that the great prayer of all the saints of all ages is about to be answered? Since Adam fell, the cry of centuries has been, "Thy kingdom come." Persecuted prophets, suffering saints, and martyrs without number have prayed and longed for this day. Through all the long and tragic night of sin, when men and women sealed their testimony in their blood, a great chorus of prayer has come up before God. Not one prayer has been lost. All have been carefully treasured, as it were, in these golden bowls.

While the elders lead the song of praise, it does not stop there; its theme is caught by the innumerable company of angels. Then it sweeps out into the periphery of God's mighty creation. Far off in the very depths of space the prophet hears the same

sound of praise. Wider and wider it spreads until it reaches every creature in God's mighty creation in heaven, in earth, and on and on through the limitless expanse of the universe, until it reaches the proportions of epic song. The whole universe is proclaiming in one rapturous song, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." (See Appendix, page 215, No. 5.)

"We shall reign on the earth," sing the elders in triumph. Verse 10. They are not on the earth now, nor will they always be in heaven. The earth is their home, and if faithful, we with them shall reign on the earth made new. This is prefigured in the marvelous setting of this great assembly. What majesty! What glory is there! Daniel, describing this, says, "His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9, 10.

But the prophet John, guided by the Spirit of God, describes the scene in greater detail. That old apostle is invited to join the company of the angelic host. He takes his place beside the living ones and the elders, and from that place of vantage he begins to watch as each event moves forward in a mighty panorama. This great scene is without parallel in all the Scriptures. It is the opening of the judgment, culminating in the second advent.

As we close this first of the thrilling scenes of the Revelation, let us with the triumphant saints unite our voices in thanksgiving to God for the hope that is ours, that throughout eternal ages it will be our privilege to sing of the Lamb and His sacrifice. Our constant song will be of Him who, having conquered death, has redeemed us to God by His blood. But if we would join in that eternal anthem of praise in the hereafter, we must catch the echo of it now, as we cry with angels and redeemed men—

"WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN."

The Apocalyptic Horsemen

PROBABLY no symbolic prophecy has received more comment than has this dramatic prophecy of the horsemen. As far back as the third century A.D., persecuted Christians were drawing much comfort and inspiration from this chapter. It was impossible, however, for this book to be fully understood until the unfolding of events. Nevertheless, Victorinus, who was martyred in A.D. 303 during the Diocletian persecutions, wrote a complete commentary on the Revelation. This commentary is still extant, and the fundamental principle of repetition which he emphasizes is vital. The prophecies of the Revelation are not successive, they are repetitive; that is, they double back, covering the same periods of time. For example, the seven seals and the seven trumpets cover the same period as do the seven churches. Naturally, there were many things that Victorinus could not know in his day, for the events portrayed had not taken place.

Another important principle in prophetic interpretation, and one that was emphasized by our Lord, is that only when prophecy is meeting its fulfillment can it be fully understood. Three times Jesus said this in the upper room: "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." John 14:29; 13:19; 16:4. The purpose of prophecy is not to make us expert in prognostication, but rather to make us humble in the presence of God, realizing that only He knows the end from the beginning. It is both interesting and inspiring to note in the study of church history that when a prophecy was

being fulfilled there were always some who recognized it. In fact, nothing is more rewarding in such study than the discovery that whenever God's great clock indicated the time had arrived when some important prophecy was about to be fulfilled, His messengers were there, ready at the risk of their lives, if need be, to herald that message. Unfulfilled prophecy, however, has ever been a fruitful field for speculation, and all too often those who are unwise and frequently uninformed have ventured into this realm. When their prognostications have not come to pass, the enemies of God's word have found cause to ridicule and denounce the whole field of prophetic interpretation. This prophecy which we are about to study has suffered much from wild and extravagant interpretations. But it is one of the most enlightening and comforting of all the prophecies in the word of God. Chapter 6 should be studied in the setting of chapters 4 and 5. Only then can we catch its true significance.

Revelation 6

Let us visualize John standing in the midst of the angels and the elders and witnessing the procedure of the greatest tribunal ever held. The cases of all professed children of God are being weighed. Each is being studied in the light of the environment in which he lived. So in that great heavenly court is made to appear the history of the ages. The books are opened, and with them another book is opened, which is the book of life. The judgment is mentioned more than a thousand times in Scripture, but it is left to Daniel and John to bring us the setting.

"Says the prophet Daniel, 'The judgment was set, and the books were opened.' The revelator, describing the same scene, adds, 'Another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' [It is significant that these two expressions are associated with the same scene. That book of life is opened again at the end of the millennium, as is revealed in Revelation 20:12.]

"The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. Jesus bade His disciples, 'Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.' Paul speaks of his faithful fellow workers, 'whose names are in the book of life.' Daniel, looking down to 'a time of trouble, such as never was,' declares that God's people shall be delivered, 'every one that shall be found written in the book.' And the revelator says that those only shall enter the City of God whose names 'are written in the Lamb's book of life.'

"'A book of remembrance' is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of 'them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.' Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven. Nehemiah refers to this when he says, 'Remember me, O my God, . . . and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God.' In the book of God's remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ's sake, is recorded. Says the psalmist, 'Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?'"—*The Great Controversy*, pages 480, 481.

How comforting it is to know that when our cases come up in review before God, our joys, our sorrows, our environment, the conditions under which each child of God has lived, will be taken into account. All is known to Him. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" asked Abraham. Genesis 18:25. The psalmist expresses it even more emphatically when he says: "The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there." Psalm 87:4-6.

When our High Priest, the heavenly Goel, the Lion of Judah and the Lamb of God, breaks the seals and opens the books, the panorama of the ages is unfolded before the great tribunal. Let us then reverently take our places beside the astonished prophet and watch as the Lamb of God unrolls the scroll.

The Opening of the Seals

As each seal opens, one of the "living creatures," or "living ones," cries with a voice like thunder, "Come." Revelation 6:1, 2. The words "and see" are omitted from many of the ancient manuscripts. Actually it is more a command to the contents of the seal than it is an invitation for the prophet to observe. Each particular period of church history is compressed into one great symbol, and, obedient to the authoritative command, the symbolic horses in a moving panorama gallop forth with their riders.

FIRST SEAL—a white horse, symbol of purity and victory.

The rider is crowned and, bearing a bow, He goes forth conquering and to conquer: a beautiful symbol of the triumphs of the gospel in the first century of the Christian dispensation. It fulfills such prophecies as Habakkuk 3:8, 9: "Thou didst ride upon Thine horses and Thy chariots of salvation. Thy bow was made quite naked." And Psalm 64:7-9: "But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. . . . And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of His doing."

Whatever spiritual lessons we may gather from this prophecy, the historic interpretation since as far back as the third century has been that these symbols picture in graphic language the decline of the spiritual life of the church.

Victorinus, that early commentator to whom we have already referred, interprets the going forth of the white horse under the first seal as the victories of the gospel over paganism in the first century. "After the Lord ascended into heaven and opened all things, He sent the Holy Spirit, whose words the preachers sent forth as arrows reaching the human heart, that they might overcome unbelief. . . . Therefore the white horse is the word of preaching with the Holy Spirit sent into the world."—Victorinus's *Commentary*. Quoted by L. E. Froom in *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 339. In Psalm 45:5 we learn that the wounds

inflicted by the arrows of the archer are emblematical of the conquests of Messiah.

"The symbol of a spiritual or heavenly warrior . . . denotes the *host of the Lord*, i.e., His church militant, shining with its primitive purity and going forth in a career of victory."—William Cunningham, *A Dissertation on the Seals and Trumpets of the Apocalypse*, 4th ed., p. 4.

In Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter 15, paragraph 54, we read, "The progress of Christianity was not confined to the Roman Empire," but "the new religion, within a century after the death of its divine Author, had already visited every part of the globe." As to numbers, the same historian declared that the Christian congregation in the city of Rome numbered not less than 50,000, and that of Antioch 100,000, or one fifth of the population. The Christian population within the empire alone was estimated at 5,000,000. Paul, writing to the church in Rome, said: "I thank my God . . . that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Romans 1:8. And to the Colossians he wrote that the gospel of which he was a minister was being "preached to every creature which is under heaven." Colossians 1:23.

SECOND SEAL—a red horse, symbol of war and bloodshed.

The contrast in color is significant. The "mystery of iniquity" was already beginning to work. The church was "falling away." 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7. Paul's predictions were being rapidly fulfilled. Acts 20:28-30.

"The fiery color of the second horse . . . and of the dreadful weapon with which he was armed, indicate to us, that, after the first and purest age of Christianity, the spirit of love and peace should recede from the visible church, and be succeeded by a spirit of discord, of dissension and controversy, a fierce and fiery zeal, instigating Christians to destroy one another. The ecclesiastical history of the fourth and fifth centuries, sufficiently evinces, that such a change did take place."—W. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

"The enmity of the Christians towards each other surpassed

the fury of savage beasts against man; and Gregory Nazianzen most pathetically laments that the kingdom of heaven was converted by discord into the image of chaos, of a nocturnal tempest, and of hell itself.”—E. Gibbon, *op. cit.*, ch. 21, par. 40.

“The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” James 3:18. But in the period denoted by the red horse, peace was taken from the earth. This corresponds with the church of Smyrna, the period of pagan persecution. How tragic that the body of believers, so pure in their faith and so filled with love for each other, should, within a century and a half, have become so contaminated by worldly ambition and competition that their condition could be symbolized by this fiery red horse! How sin and self blunt our spiritual senses!

THIRD SEAL—a black horse, symbol of subjection.

The work of corruption truly progresses fast. How the church has fallen from her high estate! Beginning in purity and power, the church became corrupted and is now in subjection to the powers of darkness. Commercialism replaces her piety. Black, the symbol of evil, error, defeat, and moral and spiritual darkness, has replaced the purity with which she began her conquests.

“As the stream of Christianity flowed farther from its fountain, it became more and more corrupt, and as the centuries advanced, superstition advanced with them; and . . . tales of purgatory, and pious frauds, and the worship of saints, relics, and images, took the place of pure and simple Christianity: till at length, the Book of God being laid aside for legendary tales, and ‘the traditions of men,’ all these corruptions were collected into a regular system of superstition and oppression.”—J. C. Woodhouse, *The Apocalypse*, page 146.

“An enormous train of different superstitions were gradually substituted in the place of true religion and genuine piety. This odious revolution was owing to a variety of causes. . . . A preposterous desire of imitating the pagan rites, and of blending them with the Christian worship, and that idle propensity which the generality of mankind have toward a gaudy and ostentatious

religion, all contributed to establish the reign of superstition upon the ruins of Christianity.”—J. L. Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, bk. 2, cent. 4, pt. 2, ch. 3.

Gibbon ironically declares that paganism disappeared only to emerge again in the church. Christianity not only conquered Rome, but Rome also conquered Christianity.

Superstition abounded and ceremonies multiplied. “Quantities of dust and earth brought from Palestine and other places remarkable for their supposed sanctity, were handed about as the most wonderful remedies against the violence of wicked spirits and were sold and bought everywhere at enormous prices. The public processions and supplications by which the pagans endeavored to appease their gods were now adopted into the Christian worship and celebrated in many places with great pomp and magnificence.”—*Ibid.*

The Balances or the Yoke in the Rider's Hand

“The balances denoted that religion and civil power would be united in the person who would administer the executive power in the government, and that he would claim the judicial authority both in church and state. This was true among the Roman emperors from the days of Constantine until the reign of Justinian, when he gave the same judicial power to the bishop of Rome.”—William Miller, *Evidence From Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ*, page 176.

The Wheat and Barley

A spiritual dearth marked the experience of the church during these centuries. A measure (*choenix*) of wheat was less than a quart. This was considered a scanty daily allowance for a soldier. In ordinary times, a penny would buy twenty-four measures of barley, but here only three—the amount allotted to a slave. Barley was eaten only by the poorest. It was considered a much cheaper grade of food than wheat. “A *denarius* [penny] was the ordinary wages for a full day’s labor. And when a choenix of wheat costs

a denarius, it is as much as a man can do to earn the bread he himself consumes, leaving nothing for his family or for his other wants. . . . The arrival of things at such a pass, accordingly argues a severity of hard times, distress, and want, almost beyond the power of imagination to depict."—J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, vol. 1, pp. 333, 334.

During this period of spiritual famine, a cheaper grade of spiritual food was being offered to the people, and they could receive only the smallest amount of the word of God. Tradition and the teachings of the Catholic fathers were being taught rather than the pure doctrines of Christ. This corrupted religion was being sold or bartered as a commodity. But pure religion cannot be purchased by either pence or penance. The Lord's invitation is: "Come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1. The foundations for the whole system of apostate Christianity were laid during this period.

FOURTH SEAL—a pale horse, symbol of death.

When a plant is shut away from the sun, it loses its color; it turns pale green. So, the church having departed from the apostolic faith, it was scarcely possible for the rays of the Sun of Righteousness to penetrate the spiritual darkness of those days. Those who should have been the ministers of life became actually the ministers of death. Controlled by the instigator of death, the devil (Hebrews 2:14), these ministers of death slew men by hunger, sword, and the beasts of the earth.

"The pale livid green color of this horse is emblematical of a state of things even more dreadful than that of the preceding seal. The character of his rider corresponds with this idea; his name is called Death, the king of terrors. He is followed by Hell. . . . The whole assemblage of figures constitutes an hieroglyphical representation, of the most horrible and terrific nature, and points out to us a period when the rulers of the visible church should seem to lose the character of men, and to assume that of malignant demons and savage beasts, and of Death himself; and

should extirpate, by fire and sword, all who dared to prefer death to the sacrifice of a good conscience. This seal evidently represents the state of the church during those ages, when the flames of persecution were kindled by the papal power."—W. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Millions were martyred for their faith during these dark centuries. J. A. Wylie stated it well when he said: "The noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world."—*The History of Protestantism*, vol. 1, p. 16.

H. G. Wells described the papacy as an attempt at world dominion through religion. What Alexander, Caesar, and others had tried to do, but failed, this politico-religious power seemed determined to accomplish. The persecutions of this power are found in other prophecies: Daniel 7:21, 25; 11:33; Matthew 24:21, 22; Revelation 13:7; 12:6, 14; 17:6. During this period, the "two witnesses" had to do their work clothed in sackcloth. Revelation 11:1-3. But God has a record of every suffering saint, and the martyrs will have a special place of honor in the coming kingdom of glory. Revelation 7:13-17; 20:4.

FIFTH SEAL—souls under the altar.

As the prophet witnessed the unfolding of events, he heard voices from under the altar crying for justice. In the Mosaic sanctuary there were two altars—the altar of incense inside, and the altar of burnt offering outside, in the court. The sacrifices were offered outside the sanctuary, the blood being poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. When the fifth seal was opened, John saw the martyrs of Jesus "under the altar," or "at the foot of the altar" (Weymouth). Their blood had been shed in the cause of Christ, and came up, as it were, in a chorus crying, "How long, O Lord, how long?"

No more dramatic picture could be given of the Reformation, which burst upon the world with a call to return to "the Bible and the Bible only" as the textbook of belief. It was a cry to God for spiritual power, and like the blood of Abel which cried unto God for vengeance (Genesis 4:10), there arose a great appeal

for vindication of the truth for which the martyrs had died.

Concerning the altar, Dr. Adam Clarke, perhaps the greatest Methodist commentator, says: "A symbolical vision was exhibited, in which he saw an altar. And under it the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God—martyred for their attachment to Christianity—are represented as being newly slain as victims to idolatry and superstition. *The altar is upon earth, not in heaven.*"

"The souls are represented under the altar, just as victims slain upon it would pour out their blood beneath it, and fall by its side."—Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, page 433.

Albert Barnes, the noted Presbyterian commentator, tells us: "We are not to suppose that this *literally* occurred, and that John actually saw the souls of the martyrs beneath the altars—for the whole representation is symbolical; nor are we to suppose that the injured and the wronged in heaven actually pray for vengeance on those who wronged them."—*Notes on the New Testament*, vol. 9, (Book of Revelation), p. 171.

John was beholding the unfolding of the panorama of the ages. This was another cycle of history.

The white robes are a symbol of the righteousness of Christ. Revelation 19:8. Those who came out of great tribulation received white robes. Revelation 7:13, 14. They include a multitude that no man can number. Verse 9. Only overcomers are clothed in white raiment. Revelation 3:5. This is the wedding garment (Matthew 22:11, 12) of which Christ spoke in the parable. In the great judgment scene in heaven, when individual cases come before God for review, each is considered in the light of heredity, opportunity, and environment. Psalm 87:6; Luke 10:10-12. And rewards will be given to each according to his faith and works under the environment in which he lived.

When Sir Samuel Morland, sent by Cromwell to investigate the papal massacre of the Waldenses, returned from the Piedmont Alps with the tragic story, the blind poet John Milton, secretary

of state under Cromwell, expressed the revulsion of the civilized world in his immortal sonnet:

Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
 Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
 Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
 When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
 Forget not: in Thy book record their groans
 Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
 Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
 Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
 To heaven their martyred blood and ashes sow
 O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
 The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
 A hundredfold, who, having learnt Thy way,
 Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

SIXTH SEAL—signs of the Lord's imminent return.

As the sixth seal opens, it is self-evident that the language changes from symbolic to literal. The Old Testament writers and Christ Himself spoke many times of great signs in the physical universe, in the sun, the moon, the stars, and the earth. These would be special indications of the imminence of our Lord's return. The fact that generations of men lived through these events makes it necessary that they come in review before God.

A Great Earthquake

The sixth seal opens with great convulsions of the earth. One of the most extensively felt earthquakes ever recorded occurred November 1, 1755. It is sometimes called "the Lisbon earthquake," because the greater part of that city was destroyed, with the loss of between 60,000 and 90,000 lives. The sea rose to fifty feet above its ordinary level.

"The great earthquake of [November 1,] 1755, extended over a tract of at least four millions of square miles. . . . It pervaded the greater portions of the continents of Europe, Africa, and America; but its extreme violence was exercised on the south-

western part of the former." "In Africa, this earthquake was felt almost as severely as it had been in Europe. . . . It is probable . . . that all Africa was shaken. . . . At the north, it extended to Norway and Sweden; Germany, Holland, France, Great Britain, and Ireland were all more or less agitated by the same great and terrible commotion of the elements."—Robert Sears, *Wonders of the World*, pages 50, 58.

Earthquakes are a sign of our Lord's near return. Devastating quakes have occurred during this present century, which have taken a frightful toll of lives: San Francisco, Jamaica, China, Japan, Mexico, Turkey, etc.

The Sun Black; the Moon as Blood

A few years after the great convulsion of 1755, other signs began to occur, in the sun, the moon, and the stars.

"Almost, if not altogether alone, as the most mysterious and as yet unexplained phenomenon of its kind, in nature's diversified range of events, . . . stands the dark day of May 19th, 1780,—a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England."—R. M. Devens, *Our First Century*, pages 89, 90.

"The dark day in Northern America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which will always be read of with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain."—Sir William Herschel. Quoted by R. M. Devens in *Our First Century*, page 90.

"The darkness of the following evening was probably as gross as ever has been observed since the Almighty fiat gave birth to light. . . . I could not help conceiving at the time, that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable shades, or struck out of existence, the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eyes, was equally invisible with the blackest velvet."—Samuel Tenny of Exeter, New Hampshire. Quoted by Uriah Smith in *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, page 445.

"That the darkness was not caused by an eclipse is manifest by the various positions of the planets of our system at that time; for the moon was more than one hundred fifty degrees from the sun all that day."—Dr. Samuel Stearns, in *Independent Chronicle*, Boston, June 22, 1780.

The next night the moon appeared blood-red. The exact cause has never been settled. Forest fires seem to offer a paltry explanation, especially in the light of scientific statements that the cause is unknown.

The Falling Stars

"On the night of November 12-13, 1833, a tempest of falling stars broke over the earth. North America bore the brunt of its pelting. From the Gulf of Mexico to Halifax, until daylight with some difficulty put an end to the display, the sky was scored in every direction with shining tracks and illuminated with majestic fireballs."—Agnes M. Clerke, *History of Astronomy in the Nineteenth Century*, page 328.

"Probably the most remarkable of all the meteoric showers that have ever occurred was that of the Leonids on [the night following] November 12, 1833. The number at some stations was estimated as high as 200,000 an hour for five or six hours."—C. A. Young, *Manual of Astronomy*, page 469.

Another great display of falling stars occurred in the Old World in 1866. While this did not meet the prophetic description so accurately, it was undoubtedly another sign of the Saviour's near return.

"There were times when it seemed as if a mighty wind had caught the old stars, loosed them from their holdings, and swept them across the firmament. . . . A most startling and most awful phenomenon. . . . But science, which dispels so many terrors and proves so many appearances, illusions, and nothing more, does not do so in this instance."—London *Times*, Nov. 15 (Thursday), 1866.

The dark day and the falling stars were remarkable signs for

that generation. But other things are happening in this generation. A few years ago science hurled humanity into the atomic age. Atomic power has sailed a submarine under the polar ice cap, and now man has plunged into space. Does the fact that man can now travel at nearly 20,000 miles an hour, 200 miles from the earth's surface, have any meaning for us? The Lord's coming will be preceded by signs in heaven and earth.

The Heaven Departed as a Scroll

This cannot refer to the celestial heavens, but rather the atmospheric heavens. The atmosphere or firmament is also called "heaven." See Genesis 1:8. At the second coming of Christ the atmosphere will pass away and the mountains and islands will disappear. Revelation 6:14; 16:18-20. Those who have spurned His grace will flee for cover, crying: "Who shall be able to stand?" Only those whose lives have been sanctified by the truth will stand. Ephesians 6:11-17. They will not fear. Psalm 46. It is significant to realize that our generation finds itself just between verses 13 and 14. The signs in the heavens have been fulfilled, and we can look confidently for the coming of our Lord. But the great question is, Who shall be able to stand?

SEVENTH SEAL—silence in heaven.

The opening of the seventh seal is found in chapter 8:1, chapter 7 being really a parenthetical chapter. This we will study later. When Jesus returns for His people, every angel in glory will accompany Him. Matthew 25:31. Those heavenly beings whose voices are heard in continual praise will descend with their Commander to bring back the ransomed of the Lord. No wonder heaven is silent, the dwelling place of God hushed because of their absence; the earth is a scene of both victory and tragedy. The righteous and the wicked are then separated. Those who have rejected the grace of God will be unable to withstand the glory which accompanies the Saviour when He returns to earth, and they will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming.² Thessalonians 2:8. Those whose hearts are perfect toward Him

will be changed in a moment (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52) and then caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). This mighty host is “the righteous nation which keepeth the truth” (Isaiah 26:2), the redeemed of all ages. They ascend together to the City of God. Will you be among them?

This vibrant hymn was written a century and a half ago. It paints a vivid picture of the power and glory of our Lord's return. The author, an Irish minister, had one passion: to preach Christ and His saving grace. He presented truth with such conviction that the pulpits of the land were later closed to him. Yet the crowds flocked to fields and factories to hear his message. This is one of 765 hymns which he wrote:

Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious,
See the Man of Sorrows now;
From the fight returned victorious,
Ev'ry knee to Him shall bow;
Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him,
Crowns become the victor's brow.

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Sinners in derision crowned Him,
Mocking thus the Saviour's claim;
Saints and angels crowd around Him,
Own His title, praise His name;
Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him,
Spread abroad the victor's fame.

Hark! those bursts of acclamation;
Hark! those loud triumphant chords;
Jesus takes the highest station;
Oh, what joy the sight affords!
Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him,
King of kings, the Lord of lords.

—Thomas Kelly, 1769-1854.

The Sealed Number, and the Innumerable Company

THIS prophecy is parenthetical. It fits into the picture as describing events that take place between verses 13 and 14 of chapter 6 just before our Lord returns in glory. When the wicked, those who have rejected salvation, see the cataclysmic events brought to view under the sixth seal, they cry in anguish of soul: "Who shall be able to stand?" Revelation 6:17. But *some* will stand. These will be the righteous who have prepared themselves to meet the Lord. In confidence they look up into the radiant heavens filled with the angelic host and in praise exclaim: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." Isaiah 25:9. This is the climax of the ages. And those who live to witness our Saviour's glorious appearing will need a special preparation of heart and life.

Revelation 7

Angels Holding the Four Winds, Revelation 7:1. Here is a picture of divine interposition. As the judgments of God are about to fall, the Lord reveals that a restraining hand is over the affairs of men. But for this, civilization would destroy itself.

"The four winds" denote the four points of the compass. Jeremiah 49:36. Wind symbolizes war or strife and commotion. Daniel 7:2; Jeremiah 25:31-34; 51:1, 2, 11. The powers of evil,

however, are not permitted to do their deadly work until God's people have been sealed for His kingdom. A seal stands for ownership and protection. At the very time all the world is turning away from God, there are faithful ones on whom the Lord can place His seal.

The "Angel Ascending From the East, Having the Seal." The word "angel," used symbolically in the Revelation, means "messenger" or "message." This angel or message carries the seal of the living God. Some translations read, "ascending from the sun-rising." This is a truer translation. It appears that the *manner*, rather than the *locality*, is emphasized. As the sun arises with its rays at first oblique and comparatively powerless, but increases in strength and glory until it reaches its zenith, so the work of this angel or message moves onward with ever-increasing influence until its work closes in strength and power, the whole earth being "lightened with his glory." Revelation 18:1.

In vision the prophet watches the panorama. He sees angels of God holding in check the forces of destruction. At the same time wicked angels are stirring up strife among the nations of the whole world, leading them on to "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:13, 14. However, not until God's work is finished in the earth are these powers of darkness permitted full scope.

The Sealing

"This action of sealing with the seal or signet of God, is equivalent to a declaration, that they, who are so sealed, appertain to God, and are distinguished as such from others who do not thus belong to Him, and are assured by Him of His protection against all evil."—Chr. Wordsworth, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*. Quoted by J. A. Seiss in *The Apocalypse*, vol. 1, pp. 423, 424.

Paul says, "The foundation of God standeth sure, *having this seal*, The Lord knoweth them that are His." 2 Timothy 2:19. God is building a noble castle or a spiritual house, and His people are the living stones that form that house, each stone bearing the seal

of ownership. 1 Peter 2:5. Among the ruins of the ancient city of Babylon are bricks stamped with the name of the builder, King Nebuchadnezzar. So we, by the grace of God, are stones in the house of God, and we bear His name or the mark of His ownership.

"This sealing secures the safety of the sealed ones as the judgment of the great day goes over the nations."—J. A. Seiss, *loc. cit.*

The purpose of a seal: "A seal is used to render valid or authentic any enactments or laws that a person or power may promulgate. Frequent instances of its use occur in the Scriptures. In 1 Kings 21:8 we read that Jezebel 'wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal.' These letters then had all the authority of King Ahab. Again, in Esther 3:12: 'In the name of King Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.' So also in Esther 8:8: 'The writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.'"—Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, page 455.

Through the prophet Isaiah the Lord says: "Seal the law among My disciples." Isaiah 8:16. When a law is placed on the statute books of the land, it is made valid by the seal of the ruler. And it is God's law that is sealed in the hearts and minds of His people. God's law was written in Christ's heart (Psalm 40:8), and one of the blessings of the new covenant is: "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Hebrews 8:10. Only as God's law is in the heart can one be victorious over sin, which is "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. The Holy Spirit is the power by which we "are sealed unto the day of redemption." Ephesians 4:30.

Someone tells the story of an old soldier of the czar who was having a bullet removed from his chest. As the surgeon probed about in an effort to find it (there were no X rays or anesthetics in those days) the patient spoke up and said: "Dig a little deeper, doctor, and there you'll find the image of the emperor." Do our hearts reflect as truly the image of our Master?

A ruler's seal must of necessity contain three things: (1) his name, (2) his office, and (3) the territory over which he has jurisdiction. Examples: Richard Milhous Nixon, President, U.S.A.; Elizabeth II, Queen, Great Britain, etc. Carrying out the analogy, we should be able to find in God's law His *name*, His *office*, and the *territory* over which He rules. Here they are, and all are found in one commandment only—the fourth. Five of the Ten Commandments mention the Lord, but four of the five do not identify Him. Only the fourth reveals His identity and His relationship to us as Creator. Note this sentence: "In six days *the Lord made heaven and earth*, the sea, and all that in them is." Exodus 20:8-11. Here God declares Himself as (1) *the Lord*—Jehovah or the Existing One; (2) *the Creator*—He made; (3) *the universe* His territory—heaven and earth, the sea, etc. As Creator, He has authority to command His creatures, and this fourth commandment which commands us to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" is the only commandment which emphasizes God as the Creator. No wonder the enemy of God and man attacks this commandment particularly! It is the one commandment of all the ten that men are prone to forget. Moreover, this Sabbath commandment is attacked from inside as well as from outside the church.

Through all the ages the enemy of God has tried to turn the minds of men away from the Creator, but in our generation his attack is more subtle. Through the evolutionary theory, millions have been led to disbelieve the whole story of creation. In so doing, they are actually rejecting God as both Creator and Redeemer, for only creative power can redeem us. It was the Creator Himself who became man that He might redeem us by His blood. Only as He creates in us a clean heart and renews in us a right spirit (Psalm 51:10), can we be citizens of His kingdom. But this is as definitely a work of creation as when He spoke worlds into existence. God's special message for this time, the message of the everlasting gospel which announces that the hour of His judgment is come, also calls men to "worship

Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Revelation 14:7. This is a call to full obedience, and in the hearts of those who heed God's call He writes His law in which is His seal or His name. The wicked, by contrast, have the name or the mark of the beast, written either in their foreheads (symbol of the mind) or in their hands (symbol of service). Revelation 13:16. But the seal of God, or the "Father's name," is found only in the foreheads of the sealed ones. Revelation 14:1; 22:4. It is not received in the hand, because the hand is a symbol of service or works. Works can never be a qualification for the reception of that seal. We are made perfect by grace alone.

Two Great World Movements

With the dawn of the nineteenth century two great movements arose: (1) world-wide missionary propaganda (Revelation 14:6, 7; Matthew 24:14); (2) world-wide atheistic propaganda (2 Peter 3:3-6). These two movements are diametrically opposed. The gospel of Christ is the basis of the first; the evolutionary theory, the basis of the second. The theory of evolution is not new. It was taught more than two thousand years ago. It became the foundation of Greek philosophy, although it was not universally believed. Today, however, it has invaded every field of education and human thought. It claims to explain life and the universe from star dust to the mind of man. Education today is permeated with this "philosophy and vain deceit"—this "science falsely so called." Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 6:20. In speculating on the age of the rocks, many have lost the Rock of Ages.

It is far more than an educational problem, however; it is a challenge to religion. Modern philosophy has tremendously affected the physical, mental, and spiritual outlook of man. It was the futile attempt to develop a so-called super race that plunged the nations into the second world war. It is claimed that every officer in the nazi army carried a copy of Nietzsche's philosophy; the Allied army carried the New Testament.

Evolution Not Confirmed by Scientific Evidence

Geology does not confirm the evolutionary theory. Even Herbert Spencer, the apostle of this philosophy, declares: "It cannot be concluded with any certainty that formations in which similar organic remains are found were of contemporaneous origin. Nor can it be safely concluded that strata containing different organic remains are of different ages."—Quoted from his famous essay, *Illogical Geology in Illustrations of Universal Progress*, page 340.

Jesus said: "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. He will have a faithful, obedient people awaiting His return. John saw these servants of God being gathered out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, and exclaimed with joy, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12. To have the faith of Jesus means to have His abiding presence in our day-by-day living. Here is a people saved by the grace of Jesus, living by the faith of Jesus, and victorious through the power of Jesus.

The Sealed Company

The redeemed of the Lord are an innumerable company, but among them is a special group designated as "the 144,000." This number is significant. Twelve is God's kingdom number. In ancient Israel there were 12 tribes; 12 rods; 12 stones gathered from Jordan; 12 stones in the high priest's breastplate, etc. In the New Testament there are 12 apostles. Their names are engraved on the 12 foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem. The names of the 12 tribes are engraved on the 12 gates of the city. This number 12 is mentioned seven times in the Revelation. The circumference of the city is 12,000 furlongs.

Now, 144,000 is the square of 12, multiplied by 1,000. This company is mentioned again in chapter 14:1. In these chapters are found many metaphorical passages, and we may lose the

beauty in this symbol by insisting on making this a strictly literal number. This number signifies completeness. E. W. Bullinger declares: "This number is found in all that has to do with rule. The sun which 'rules' the day, and the moon and the stars which 'govern' the night, do so by their passage through the *twelve* signs of the Zodiac, which completes the great circle of the heavens of 360 (12 x 30) degrees or divisions, and thus govern the year."—*Number in Scripture*, page 252.

Who Are the Sealed Ones?

The word *Israel* means "God ruled" and designates an overcomer. See Psalm 73:1. Jacob received the name "Israel" after he had wrestled with the angel. God said: "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Genesis 32:28. Only those who have overcome are the true Israel of God. Romans 2:28, 29; 9:6; Galatians 3:29; 6:15, 16.

These tribes cannot be the literal tribes of Jacob, because two of the original tribes, Ephraim and Dan, are not even named. Both were leaders in idolatry. The tribe of Ephraim was proud and haughty, while Dan was "a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." Genesis 49:17. Pride, criticism, and idolatry will have no place in the kingdom of God.

Those only who are victorious over sin receive the seal of God. Revelation 7:2-4. They are victorious over the beast and his image. Revelation 15:2. They are the first fruits; first in quality among the redeemed. Revelation 14:3, 6. They stand with the Lamb on heavenly Mount Zion. Verse 1. They sing a song no one else can learn. Verse 3. They have no guile and are without fault before the throne. Verse 5. They follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Verse 4.

The Innumerable Company, Revelation 7:9-17

The expression "after this" applies naturally to a scene following the sealing of the special company. The prophet saw

"a great multitude, which no man could number," gathered from all nations. While this seems to indicate a different group from the 144,000, yet they may well be included in the great multitude, for this innumerable company "came out of great tribulation." Daniel speaks of "a time of trouble, such as never was" during which God's people will be preserved. That time of trouble will burst upon the unready world as Christ finishes His work of intercession and judgment.

"When He [Christ] leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old."—*The Great Controversy*, page 614.

"They shall hunger no more." Evidently these have passed through the seven last plagues and have known what it is to be hungry and thirsty and to have the discomfort of the sun when it scorches the wicked. Revelation 16:8. But through all these plagues and convulsions of nature they have been protected. Now they are beyond the need of protection, and, wearing the robes of victors, "they . . . follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Revelation 14:4; 7:17.

When God's work of salvation is complete, what a wonderful testimony it will bear to His love and grace! Even now, scattered among all people, there are those who are endeavoring to serve God. They are living up to all the light they have, and although

they are amid darkness, the Lord knows them, and in the great crisis just ahead they will stand firmly for the living God and His truth.

"Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and of South America, in China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, *God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones* that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law. . . . The darker the night, the more brilliantly will they shine.

"What strange work Elijah would have done in numbering Israel at the time when God's judgments were falling upon the backsliding people! He could count only one on the Lord's side. . . . The word of the Lord surprised him, 'Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal.' "—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 188, 189.

Elijah was worried about the spiritual conditions of his day. It seemed that he was the only one left who was serving Jehovah. But God declared that things were 7,000 times better than he thought. God has many of His children scattered around the world. They are found in all the churches and even outside the churches. His sealing message is speeding to every land, gathering those whose hearts are perfect toward Him. Clad in white robes and arrayed in the righteousness of Christ, they stand at last a victorious host, saved by divine grace. Of them we read, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. . . . For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Revelation 7:16, 17.

Every one of us can be among that group. The call is as wide as the world. "Whosoever will" may come. Revelation 22:17.

History's Pageant of Conquest and Defeat

HAVING witnessed some of the fast-moving scenes connected with the climax of history, the prophet suddenly breaks off and speaks of a strange and awesome silence. It is like a hush before a storm, or a tension before great armies are launched in battle. What means this silence? and what about the angel who offers incense upon the golden altar before the throne? In the priestly services of ancient Israel we find our answers.

Could we be transported back to the Mosaic sanctuary we would see the daily sacrifice of the priests. Each day one of them took fire from the altar, and filling a censer, burned the incense. As the fragrance permeated the camp it was in reality a call to prayer. But on one particular day of the year—the great Day of Atonement—the work was performed by the high priest alone. While he was offering the incense upon the altar the congregation outside the sanctuary was engaged in solemn, soul-searching prayer. The high priest then would fill a censer, and after offering "much incense" he would solemnly enter the most holy place, and, pausing before the sacred ark in which rested the Ten Commandments, he would sprinkle the mercy seat seven times with blood in a ceremonial cleansing. On this important day, Moses said, the whole congregation and the sanctuary itself must "be clean from all your sins before the Lord." Leviticus 16:30.

That Day of Atonement was also known as the day of expiation or judgment, for on that day all the confessed sins of

Israel were ceremonially removed. To complete the day's services the scapegoat, defiled by those sins and acting as a vehicle for their removal, was led out into the wilderness. Several outstanding students and Bible commentators have noted the similarity of expression in this ancient service and the description here in Revelation 8:1-5. To mention just one, Sir Isaac Newton says these events belong not in the days when John wrote, but are a prophecy relating to the very closing days of human history. With this we heartily agree, for the services of the Mosaic ritual were but a foreshadowing of a greater service carried on by Christ, our antitypical High Priest, in a greater sanctuary, not on earth, but in heaven.

In ancient Israel the religious year began in the ceremonial Passover Feast and the offering of the wave sheaf, and the Feast of First Fruits, or Pentecost. These typified our Lord's death, His resurrection, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In the autumn came the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and, every fifty years, the jubilee. These foreshadowed events connected with the climaxing of our Lord's high-priestly ministry and His return in glory. The Day of Atonement in ancient Israel was of particular significance, for it represented the preadvent judgment, when the cases of all men will be settled for eternity. See page 56.

From the study of related prophecies we are confident that we are now living in the antitypical day of atonement, or day of judgment. The attitude of God's ancient people as they searched their souls and confessed their sins should be the attitude of His people today. If the typical Day of Atonement or judgment was important to them, how much more is the antitypical day of judgment for us? So long as the high priest was performing his work of intercession in the sanctuary of old, the opportunity for getting right with God was theirs. But when the high priest came out of the sanctuary it was too late to make confession. Those refusing to confess were banished from the congregation.

We learn much from that typology, for Jesus Christ, our

heavenly High Priest, is still making intercession for us in the heavenly sanctuary. How wonderful to know He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He is neither deaf nor indifferent. Our prayers come up before Him as sweet incense, and He delights to take our poor praises and petitions and mingle them with His spotless righteousness that they may be acceptable at the throne of grace.

No matter what the conditions in our world—war, calamity, or spiritual declension—the child of God can still have fellowship with Him in prayer. The great preadvent judgment where our Lord is both Advocate and Judge is now in session. But soon it will close, and just as ancient Israel's priest came out of the earthly sanctuary on the typical Day of Atonement or day of expiation, so will our great High Priest during this antitypical day of atonement conclude His work of ministry. Then, summoning every angel in glory, He will descend the flaming skies as King of kings and Lord of lords. All these great truths are implied in John's description in the first five verses of chapter 8.

They actually belong to the preceding prophecy. The division of the Bible into chapters and verses was to help the reader in locating Scripture references, and was the work of later scholars. The divisions are, therefore, not part of the inspired writing, and sometimes they come in unfortunate places. This is one of them, for it is self-evident that these opening verses belong to the preceding chapter.

Now we come to the great prophecy of the seven trumpets, one of the most arresting portions of God's word. It unfolds history from the military aspect, revealing the great international movements which so definitely affected the church and her witness for Christ. Like other prophecies, it climaxes in the coming of our Lord in glory, for with the seventh and last trumpet blast the world and its affairs are brought to an end. Revelation 11:15. This prophecy established the advent message.

The empire of Rome was ruling when this great panorama was opened to the apostle John. The rule of Rome was autocratic

and at times brutally cruel and unjust, yet strangely enough, the Christians of that time were praying for her continuance, for they understood from the writings of both Daniel and Paul that the collapse of the empire would mark the time for the appearance of the dreaded antichrist. But Rome was so corrupt that it was impossible for her to continue. Like the empires that preceded her, she at last fell and found herself on the rubbish heap of history. Any nation that defies God and corrupts her people is doomed. Rome's subsequent division was clearly prophesied by Daniel. The prophetic symbols of the seven trumpets show how the empire broke up.

Significance of First Trumpet, Revelation 8:7

Anciently, the trumpet was used to summon great gatherings as in Israel (*Leviticus 23:24*), or to herald the approach of disaster or war. So the prophecy of the seven trumpets unfolds seven great warnings; the first four telling of the collapse of *Western Rome*; the next two, the overthrow of *Eastern Rome*; and the seventh, the last, revealing the collapse of *all human government*, when the kingdom of eternal peace will be ushered in.

The first great judgment which fell on Western Rome came from Alaric, a man who had been an officer in the Roman army. He united the powerful Germanic peoples and led the first invasion of Rome. The death of Theodosius, the Roman emperor, occurred in January, A.D. 395; and before the end of the winter the Goths, under Alaric, were in arms. After several years of ravaging the Eastern Empire they crossed the Danube and came like a hailstorm from the Alps, thus answering the apocalyptic description. The city of Rome fell to this plundering invader A.D. 410. The blast of this first trumpet, which shook the empire to its foundation, was represented by "hail," and "fire," and "blood;" a dramatic description of the terrible slaughter that followed the invasion by the Goths. For six days the armies of Alaric pillaged the palaces, carrying off gold and silver plate,

furniture, and priceless statuary. After pillaging the city, he went down into southern Italy and was later buried, with much of his treasure, in the bottom of a river. The slaves who buried him were all slain, so the place of that burial remains a secret.

The Second Trumpet Sounds, Revelation 8:8, 9

This second trumpet describes a maritime war. It was as if “a great mountain burning with fire” were cast into the sea. The Vandals invaded Rome from Africa through the Mediterranean. Their ambitious leader possessed no scruples. Once in the waters of the Mediterranean, Genseric set his heart on Rome. In the year 455 he sailed into the mouth of the Tiber, pillaged the city, and took thousands of citizens prisoner, including the empress and her two daughters. “Vandalism” is a word in our vocabulary today, and it comes to us with all these implications. The fleet of Rome, 1,300 ships, far outnumbered the fleet of the invader. Therefore the Romans entered the battle with some assurance of victory. But this clever admiral of the Vandals, under cover of darkness, towed some ships loaded with combustibles among the ships of the Roman fleet, setting fire to them. That night saw more than 1,100 ships destroyed. How accurate and descriptive is the divine record!

The Third Trumpet Sounds, Revelation 8:10, 11

The next invasion was by the Huns. The star that burned like a lamp is universally taken to be Attila, their leader. He did not attack Rome itself, but his devastations helped in the overthrow of the empire. Attila was a fearless, muscular pagan. His men scarified their faces to add terror to their appearance. Each man rode one horse and led three. The star, called “Wormwood,” denotes the bitter consequences of Attila’s attacks. The whole breadth of Europe, from the Volga to the Danube, was invaded, occupied, and desolated by the hordes of Attila, who called himself “The Scourge of God.” Rushing like a blazing meteor, this bold and crafty leader boasted that the grass would never

grow where his horse's feet had trod. In addition to his devastation, he compelled Rome to pay a large indemnity. The word "Hun" to this day is a synonym for plunder and destruction. The mighty fabric of Rome was shaken, and she was already in a state of collapse; but still greater calamity was yet to befall the corrupt empire.

Lest we wonder why such devastation was permitted, the prophet tells us that "the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands: . . . neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." Revelation 9:20, 21. Nationwide sin brings nationwide calamity.

The Fourth Trumpet Sounds, Revelation 8:12

When the fourth angel sounded, the sun, moon, and stars were smitten. One puppet emperor after another arose, until at last a mere boy, Romulus Augustulus, was given the Roman purple. In the year 476 Odoacer, the chief of a barbarian remnant of Attila, declared that the name and office of the Roman emperor of the West should be abolished. The senate bowed in submission, and so Romulus Augustulus, the last of the Roman rulers, was dethroned. Thus, the "sun" of the empire had set. The "moon" and "stars"—the consuls and the senate—lingered a little longer, but before another half century had passed these, too, were extinguished. Barbarian warfare was terrible, but the overthrow of Rome was but the harvest of its own sowing. It declined as it had arisen—by conquest. It was the coming of a vacant night, spoken of by historians as the Dark Ages.

Western Rome had collapsed. "Woe, Woe, Woe," cried the angel, because the next three trumpets were yet to be sounded.

The Fifth Trumpet Sounds, Revelation 9:1-11

Eastern Rome is the focal point of interest under the fifth and sixth trumpets. No more descriptive prophecy can be found in all the Bible. The blast of the fifth trumpet was fulfilled in

the rise and progress of the Arabs. Arabia has been called "the pit of the abyss," because of its deserts and empty areas. It was here that Mohammedanism arose and spread like "a smoke." This false and fanatical faith threatened at one time to obscure the light of the gospel. The Saracenic invasion could be described in no better language than is used here. Like a horde of locusts out of the smoke, Mohammedanism swept on. The "star" to whom the key was given well describes the prophet Mohammed. But, although fanatical, they were not plunderers like the conquerors of Western Rome.

When the Arabian tribes gathered for the conquest of Syria, A.D. 632, Mohammed's uncle, Abu Bekr, who succeeded the prophet after his death, gave this following order, which fits the Bible prophecy exactly: "When you fight the battles of the Lord, acquit yourselves like men, without turning your backs; but let not your victory be stained with the blood of women or children. Destroy no palm trees, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. [Read Revelation 9:4.] When you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God that way: let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries: and you will find another sort of people, that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they either turn Mohammedans or pay tribute."—E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. 51, par. 10.

Note the accurate description of these conquerors in Revelation 9:7-9. "Their faces were as the faces of men." (They wore beards.) "They had hair as the hair of women." (Their hair was long.) They had "crowns like gold." (These stately warriors wore a brilliant headdress or turban.) "Their teeth were as the teeth of lions." (They were fearless fighters.) "The shapes of the locusts were like unto the horses prepared unto battle." (The

Arabian horse is still a synonym of quality among equestrians, while skill in horsemanship is an Arabian art.) How accurate is God's word! They would "hurt men five months." Verse 10. For hundreds of years, the Mohammedan and Tatar tribes were divided into bands under separate leaders with little or no organization. Near the close of the thirteenth century, Othman founded a government which ever since has been known as the Ottoman Empire. This grew until it extended over all the principal Mohammedan tribes, consolidating them into one monarchy.

"They had a king over them, . . . whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon." These two names denote the character of the people. *Abaddon* means "the destroyer," and *Apollyon*, "one that exterminates." The five months is an important prophetic period which establishes prophetic chronology in a marvelous way. Recognizing the well-proved principle in prophetic chronology that a day represents a year, we have the following: 5 months of 30 days each would mean 5 times 30, or 150 days. But reckoning "a day for a year" (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6), this period of 150 prophetic days becomes 150 literal years during which the Ottoman Empire would hurt and destroy men. The historian E. Gibbon says: "It was on the twenty-seventh of July, in the year twelve hundred and ninety-nine of the Christian Era, that Othman first invaded the territory of Nicomedia; and the singular accuracy of the dates seems to disclose some foresight of the rapid and destructive growth of the monster." *Op. cit.*, ch. 64, par. 14. Starting from this date, we count 150 years, and this brings us to A.D. 1449. During these 150 years the Ottoman Empire engaged in almost continual warfare against the Greek Empire. They did not conquer it until 1449, when the last of the Greek emperors, Constantine, took the throne, but only after seeking permission of the sultan of the Ottoman Empire!—a striking fulfillment of prophecy that they should hurt men for five months, or 150 years. Their increased power, now, would enable them "to slay" under the next trumpet, which they did until their decline.

The Sixth Trumpet Sounds, Revelation 9:12-21

This particular portion of the Revelation became a subject of intense study during the great advent awakening of 1830-1844. The accuracy and drama of its fulfillment led to the conversion of more than one thousand infidels. When the sixth trumpet sounded, John declares that four angels were loosed which were bound to the great river Euphrates. Verse 14. This expression, scholars have believed, refers to the four leading sultanies, *Aleppo, Iconium, Damascus, and Baghdad*, which comprised the Ottoman Empire. They were situated in the region of the Euphrates River. They were to be loosed for a specific period: an hour, a day, a month, and a year. Before making this remarkable calculation, let us notice verse 17: "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone." Could language more accurately describe the Turkish horsemen as they rode to battle clad in uniforms of red and blue and yellow?—"Fire," "jacinth" (or hyacinth), and "brimstone."

It was the Ottoman Turk who largely introduced firearms into warfare. These old-time cavalrymen fired their muskets from their hips as they rode along, and to the prophet it would appear as if smoke were issuing from the horses' mouths. The stories of conquests by the Turks have filled many volumes. Rising like a mighty tide, these fanatical followers of Mohammed spread from country to country, threatening to submerge all Europe. But this phenomenal rise has been eclipsed only by the speed of their decline. The Turk lost his possessions slice by slice, until, in 1838, trouble broke out between the sultan and Mehemet Ali, pasha of Egypt. Foreign intervention, however, for a time prevented war. But peace was not to last long, for the following year, when hostilities again broke out, the sultan's army was entirely cut up and destroyed, while his fleet was captured and taken to Egypt.

It appeared certain that Constantinople would become an Egyptian possession. Helpless and hopeless, the sultan appealed to Europe for help. A conference was called in London among England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, with Effendi Bey Likgis as mediator for the Ottoman power. An ultimatum was drawn up to be presented to Egypt in the year 1840. Now notice this prophet's measurement—"a day, and a month, and a year." This was the period given to this power. As already mentioned, the five-month period associated with the previous trumpet commenced in 1299, according to Gibbon, and ended in 1449. Still calculating a day for a year and recognizing that a prophetic month is 30 days, let us make this further calculation: 1 day=1 year; 1 month=30 years; 1 year=360 years. This totals 391 years. Reckoning from the summer of 1449, the 391 years will bring us to the summer of 1840. As already mentioned, it was on July 27, 1299, that Othman invaded Nicomedia. This began the previous measurement of 150 years. Now let us add the last fraction of the measurement—the "one hour." An hour is $\frac{1}{24}$ part of a day. This fractional part of a year is 15 days. Adding 15 days brings us to August 11, the day the fog lifted allowing the ships to enter the harbor.

It is significant that, following the London conference already referred to, the sultan dispatched Rifat Bey as plenipotentiary to Alexandria to communicate the ultimatum to the pasha. At the same time the great powers pledged themselves to be ready to take any steps they might deem necessary in the event of further hostilities. It is recorded that on the very day, August 11, the ultimatum reached Alexandria. How accurate is the finger of prophetic time! But where was the sultan's independence? Gone! and gone forever! As a sick man, he virtually collapsed into the friendly arms of the great powers of Europe, and from that day until 1917, when the last of the sultans fled in terror from his capital, the Turk was styled "The Sick Man of the East."

This remarkable fulfillment of prophecy had a tremendous effect upon the public mind at the time. The evidence was inescapable. Two years prior to this time, Josiah Litch of Phila-

delphia published his interpretation of this prophecy, in which he took the unqualified position that the Ottoman Empire would fall in August, 1840. It seemed a bold thing to do, especially in the face of a growing infidelity and rationalism. His statement is arresting: "But when will this power be overthrown? According to the calculations already made that the five months ended 1449, the hour, fifteen days; the day, one year; the month, thirty years; and the year, three hundred and sixty years; in all—three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days, will end in A.D. 1840, sometime in the month of August."—Josiah Litch, *The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ About A.D. 1843*, page 157.

A short time before the event, he even went so far as to declare it would be the eleventh day of August. His views on the Ottoman question were noted in public journals, and various infidel clubs discussed his views, ridiculing the man for having the audacity to make such a claim. He was a deep student of both history and prophecy and became a fearless champion of the cause of Christ, declaring that the future would vindicate the veracity of God's word. It did! When the news of the collapse of the sultan's empire was flashed to the unbelieving world, it was startling. Moreover, some of the very ones who had ridiculed now renounced their rationalism. Within a few months, it is reported, Litch "received letters from more than one thousand prominent infidels, some of them leaders of infidel clubs, in which they stated they had given up the battle against the Bible and had accepted it as God's revelation to man." Some expressed themselves in such words as these: "We have said that expositors of prophecy quote from the musty pages of history to substantiate their claims of prophetic fulfillments, but in this case we have the living facts before our eyes."

Succeeding events have revealed even more wonderfully the truth of Scripture prophecy. When Palestine fell to the Allied forces during World War I, the sultan, realizing his imminent danger, sought protection on a British gunboat and fled from Constantinople to Alexandria. With his departure from the

capital departed also the last remains of the old Ottoman Empire. Out of its ruins arose the new Republic of Turkey, with Mustapha Kemel as its first dictator. Constantinople is still occupied by Turks, but the new Turkey is vastly different from the old Ottoman Empire. She is taking her place today among the United Nations. But the empire of the sultans collapsed in 1917.

These two prophetic periods, the 150 years and the 391 years, connected with the fifth and sixth trumpets, are differently applied, but always they are associated with this same Mohammedan power. From the time the prophet Mohammed began his public preaching in A.D. 612, to the founding of the city of Baghdad by Al-Mansur in A.D. 762, is 150 years. This city, made famous in English literature by the *Arabian Nights*, was called Dar es Salaam, "house of peace," or "city of peace," and it marks the termination of the spread of the Arabian Empire.

And it is also significant that from 1453, which marks the fall of Constantinople, the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, and the establishment of the Ottomans, until the hour of God's judgment began in 1844, is exactly 391 years.

"The second woe is past," declared the voice in heaven, "and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." Between the end of the sixth and the sounding of the seventh trumpet, a great movement was to arise through which God is to carry the message of the everlasting gospel to all the world. This will be explained in the next chapter, on Revelation 10.

The Seventh Trumpet Sounds, Revelation 11:15

With the sounding of the seventh trumpet the mystery of God is finished and "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever." Verse 15. O long-expected day of glory! O welcome voice that declares the mystery of God finished and ushers in the eternal reign of righteousness! Saints, apostles, patriarchs, and martyrs have all alike been looking for the dawning of that day. It cannot be far distant, for with the closing of

the sixth trumpet or the second woe, the seventh trumpet or the "third woe cometh *quickly*." It will be a day of deliverance to the people of God.

When the elders, seated on their thrones, hear the sound of voices in heaven declaring that the kingdoms of this world are given over to Christ, they fall on their faces in worship, saying, "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty; . . . because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power." Verse 17. It is the time "that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets," they exclaim, "and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great." Verse 18. It is also a time of terrible judgment upon the despisers of His grace when God will "destroy them which destroy" [or "corrupt," margin] the earth. Verse 18. "The nations were angry," declare the elders. How true! We see the results of their anger in the blood-soaked cities where ghastly ruin marks the awful march of war. The words of Jesus as recorded in Luke 21:26 are certainly true today: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

But this mighty panorama shows us where we are; we are almost home. The very things we see are but the omens of the coming day of triumph. The work of the gospel will soon be finished. Someday not distant, the last sermon will be preached, the last invitation given, and then it will be too late to accept salvation. The saddest words in all the Bible are these: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jeremiah 8:20.

But as Christians we need not fear the tragedies of our time. If the peace of God that passeth all understanding fills our hearts and we are walking with our Lord in sacrifice and service, then we can confidently look for His appearing, knowing we shall be received of Him when He appears in glory. With John the revelator we can say with confidence: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The Angel With the Book, Open

LIKE chapter 7, this prophecy also is parenthetical. It falls between the sixth and seventh trumpets of chapters 8 and 9, and 11:15. It gives another picture of God's last message to the world before the second coming of Christ. When the seventh angel sounds, "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord." Revelation 11:15. But he is restrained from blowing his trumpet until the sealing work is accomplished. This work is pictured in chapter 7:1-3.

The Mighty Angel

Six times in the Revelation a heaven-sent message is symbolized by an angel. But the description of this angel is more glorious than the others; "His face was as it were the sun." Revelation 10:1. The similarity of the description of Christ in chapter 1:13-16 leads many to believe that this angel must be Christ. When transfigured before the disciples, "His face did shine as the sun." Matthew 17:2. He is called "the Messenger of the covenant" (Malachi 3:1), and "the Angel which redeemed me" (Genesis 48:16).

The Rainbow and the Cloud

A rainbow, or more accurately *the* rainbow (see chapter 4:3), glows about His head, a token of His covenant of love. The "cloud" is also a token of Deity. Clouds and glory covered Him at Sinai. "Clouds [are] His chariots." Psalm 104:3.

This mighty Angel's standing on both the land and the sea

indicates that the message He brings is for all the world. Thus in prophetic pictures John gives us the beginning of a world movement.

The Book Open

The language suggests that the little book had not always been open. The message symbolized by this angel unsealed the book to permit the study of its message. What book could it be? There seems only one answer, for as far as is recorded the only part of Scripture closed or sealed was a portion of the book of Daniel. The prophet was told definitely to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end." Daniel 12:4, 9. Since it was closed up only *till* the time of the end, it naturally follows that *at* the time of the end it would be opened.

"It was not given him [Daniel] to understand all that God had revealed of the divine purpose. 'Shut up the words, and seal the book,' he was directed concerning his prophetic writings; these were to be sealed 'even to the time of the end.' 'Go thy way, Daniel,' the angel once more directed the faithful messenger of Jehovah; 'for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. . . . Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.'

"As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures. Satan has led many to believe that the prophetic portions of the writings of Daniel and of John the revelator cannot be understood. But the promise is plain that special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies. 'The wise shall understand,' was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 547, 548.

Daniel had asked, "*How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?*" Daniel 12:6. The angel, in giving the answer, spoke about the scattering of the holy people. That seemed strange to

him, and he says, "I heard, but I understood not." Verses 7, 8. It was not possible, when Daniel wrote, for him to understand, because certain events must occur first. But at "the time of the end," he was assured, some would understand. Said the angel, "The words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried: . . . but the wise shall understand." Verses 9, 10.

"The Time of the End" of Daniel's Prophecy

The prophetic expression "the time of the end" is not the end of time. It refers to the end of the 1260-year period of papal supremacy which lasted from A.D. 538 to 1798. And, true to the prediction, when the prophetic period of 1260 years terminated, students of Bible prophecy in many lands began simultaneously, and without any collusion, to concentrate on the study of the 2300-day prophecy in Daniel 8 and 9. See *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, by L. E. Froom, vol. 3, pp. 263-277.

The prophecy of these chapters concerns two periods of time; that is, the 70 weeks and the 2300 days. Jewish scholars since before the time of Christ were interpreting the 70-week prophecy. John the Baptist, Israel's greatest reformer, came with a definite message relating to time. He applied these Messianic prophecies to Christ, declaring that "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," was none other than Jesus. John's forceful interpretations of prophecy made him the herald of the Messiah. Jesus said, "There hath not risen a greater than John." Matthew 11:11. (Since a prophetic day, as we have noticed in other studies, equals a literal year, according to Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6, 70 weeks would be 490 years.)

Calculating the Seventy Weeks of Daniel

When Jesus began to preach, He declared: "The time is fulfilled." Mark 1:15. The fulfillment of the 70-week prophecy revealed conclusively that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. He was "cut off" exactly in the midst of the last prophetic week. He was

to "confirm the covenant with many for one week [7 years]: and in the midst of the week [after 3½ years] he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Daniel 9:27. By His death our Lord brought to an end the whole sacrificial service of the Old Testament. The 70-week prophecy began with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. Verse 25. This decree was issued in 457 B.C. Ezra 7:11-26. This date, disputed by some, has been confirmed by sound scientific proofs. (See *The Chronology of Ezra 7*, by S. H. Horn, Ph.D., and L. H. Wood, Ph.D.)

Sixty-nine of those prophetic weeks, or 483 literal years, will bring us down to the Messiah. The decree for rebuilding Jerusalem having gone forth in 457 B.C., it is easy to determine when the period of 69 weeks or 483 years would terminate. In calculating B.C. dates we must subtract. So, 483 years from the date 457 B.C. will bring us actually to A.D. 27. Jesus was indeed baptized A.D. 27, and in that year He began His ministry. His message, like that of John, was: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1:15. Just 3½ years later, or A.D. 31, "the midst of the week," Jesus was crucified.

There were still 3½ years left of that last prophetic week. What do we find? The church in Jerusalem preached the gospel of Christ unhindered for 3½ years. Then in A.D. 34, Stephen, the first Christian martyr, met his death. At that time there was a great persecution against the church that was at Jerusalem, and its members were all scattered abroad. The believers then began to give the gospel in earnest to the Gentiles. Saul of Tarsus was converted that year, A.D. 34, and he became the great missionary to the Gentile world. This prophecy of the 70 weeks proves beyond question the Messiahship of Jesus.

It is interesting to note in passing that Jewish teachers and rabbis have for centuries been forbidden to teach and interpret this prophecy. "In 1656, a dispute occurred in Poland between some distinguished Jewish rabbis and the Catholics respecting the 70 weeks. The rabbis were so hard pushed by the argument that

proved Jesus to be the Messiah, the time of His sufferings being at the end of the 70 weeks, that they broke up the discussion. The rabbis then held a meeting and pronounced a curse upon any Jew who should attempt to ascertain the chronology of the prophetic period. Their anathema was this: ‘May his bones and his memory rot who shall attempt to number the 70 weeks.’”—*The Midnight Cry*, Aug. 10, 1843.

These events concerning the sacrifice of Christ and the establishment of the church, however, not only terminated the 70-week prophecy; they also “sealed up” the “vision” of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 and 9:24. The purpose of this 70-week or 490-year prophecy was to establish and clarify *the vision* of the 2300 days which Daniel did not understand. Daniel 8:27; 9:23. The time for the commencement of the 70 weeks, or the 490 years, is the same as for the 2300 days or years. Both periods began in the “seventh year of Artaxerxes,” or 457 B.C. The 490 years were a period “determined,” “shortened,” or “cut off” from the longer period of 2300 years. Subtracting 490 from 2300 leaves a remainder of 1810 years. Now add this remainder, 1810, to the date A.D. 34, which is the terminal date for the 490 years, and you are brought to the significant date 1844. What happened then? This was the year when our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, the Goel, or Redeemer, of the lost inheritance, lifted the fast-closed title deeds, opened the books, and began the closing phase of His ministry. Those marvelous events of chapter 5 were fulfilled at the termination of the 2300 years, or in 1844. While almost every Bible writer deals with the judgment and its effects, yet Daniel is the only prophet who locates the actual time when this work began. (Note diagram at end of chapter, page 105.)

The Prophecy Unsealed

So long as his prophecy was sealed and that portion of his book closed, men were unable fully to understand or interpret the message of the judgment. But with the overthrow of papal domination in 1798, men began to study this prophecy of the

2300 days or years with a keen desire to understand it. Daniel's prophecy declared that the people of God *would* understand it; and they did. The unfolding of this great prophecy led multiplied thousands to the conviction that the coming of the Lord was very near, and thousands began to proclaim the message of the soon returning Saviour. The great religious awakening of the nineteenth century resulted from this intensive study. Nothing since apostolic days has caused a greater interest in spiritual things, except for the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

"Take It {the Little Book}, and Eat It Up," Revelation 10:9

Basing their conclusions on the prophecy of the 2300 days, hundreds of preachers in Europe, America, and many other lands predicted the literal return of Christ in or about the year 1844. Among these preachers were many leaders of the Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, etc. It was a heart-stirring message and appealed to the most spiritual of the congregations. They eagerly devoured the message. Like Jeremiah of old, they could say, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Jeremiah 15:16.

The angel with uplifted hand in the attitude of an oath was startling. He said that "there should be time no longer." Prophetic time had reached its end. No chronological prophecy would extend beyond that time. And actually those who were interpreting the 2300-year prophecy were declaring that *time would be no longer*. They fully expected the Lord to come in 1844 or near that time. The central theme of their message was the imminent return of Christ. The announcement of the angel in Revelation 10, however, was not concerning the end of *literal* time, but rather the end of *prophetic* time. The year 1844 marks the termination of the 2300-day prophecy, since which time the world has been living in what might be called "borrowed time." *There is no chronological prophecy in the Bible which extends beyond 1844.*

"It Shall Be in Thy Mouth Sweet as Honey," Revelation 10:9

The announcement of our Lord's near return in glory was received with great enthusiasm. Multitudes of the most devout Christians, especially in America and Europe, were thrilled by the message, and, like the prophet John, they took the book and ate it up. Like the prophet Ezekiel, they ate the roll, then went and proclaimed the message. Ezekiel 3:1. This perfectly describes the experience of earnest believers at that time. Joy filled their hearts. But they were doomed to disappointment. When the time arrived and Jesus did not appear, it was a crushing blow to their faith. What had been as sweet as honey now became as bitter as gall. "It shall make thy belly bitter," said the angel.

The disciples of Christ passed through a similar experience. Could anything have been more tragic than the death of Jesus, for men who had given up their all, believing He was the Christ? When they took the form of their loved Lord from the cross, they buried their hopes with His body in Joseph's new tomb. But their work was not finished. In fact, it had hardly begun. It was after their great disappointment that the apostles did their greatest work. On the evening after the resurrection, we read that the Lord "opened . . . their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Luke 24:45. Disappointments are often His appointments, and, like the apostles eighteen centuries before, this great disappointment of 1844 proved to be a blessing in disguise. A greater message was yet to be given the world. True, some renounced their faith and turned from the word of God, but that very disappointment drove others to a deeper study of the Bible.

***"Thou Must Prophecy Again Before Many Peoples,"
Revelation 10:11***

Thrilling as was the message which swept through the churches prior to 1844, it was not the final message of God. New light was to break upon the path of the searchers of God's word. A

greater message, embracing prophecies not even thought about, was to come into focus as the result of that study. And that message in its fullness was to be given to the whole world to prepare a people to stand in the day of God. The command to John to "prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings," was prophetic of the church, which, following the great disappointment, was to hasten to the earth's far ends with a message for all, kings and peasants alike.

"Rise, and Measure the Temple," Revelation 11:1

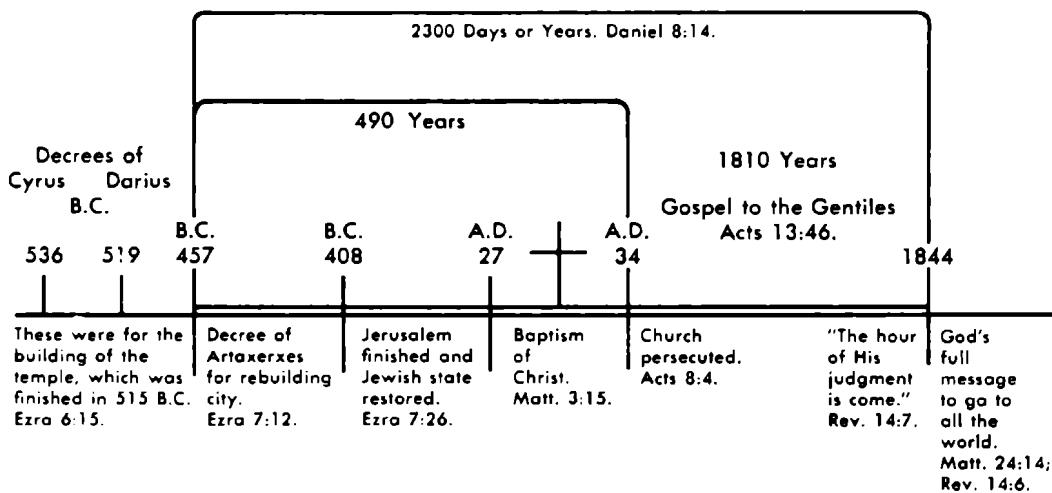
Again the command comes to John and is prophetic of the renewed study of the prophecies on the part of those earnest searchers for truth. The prophet's attitude and response to these mighty unfoldings has been, and is again, emblematic of the attitude of the true church of God when these events became history. The discouraged worshipers after the passing of the date 1844 were to "arise, shine," for new light had come, and the glory of the Lord was to be upon them. Isaiah 60:1. And that light was a mightier message, which would illumine the whole world with its glory. Revelation 18:1. It would shine forth in its brilliance in the darkest hour of human history. Isaiah 60:2.

Since 1844, God's last message, greater in scope and power, has been hastening on to the earth's far ends. The "everlasting gospel" is being proclaimed in the setting of the judgment-hour message and it is being preached in more than 800 languages, as well as many scores of dialects.

"The Mystery of God Should Be Finished," Revelation 10:7

The mystery of God is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 6:19. It is embodied in His person and His work. Paul speaks of it as "the mystery of His will." Ephesians 1:9. "Great is the mystery of godliness," he exclaims. 1 Timothy 3:16. The purpose of the gospel is to take out a people for His name. Acts 15:14. And they are being hastily gathered from every nation under heaven. Revelation 14:6.

God's last message that gathers out the people who are to stand in the final days of earth's history is a message which embraces *every truth of every reformation of every age*. Here is God's true plan for the union of the churches. If men would come together with open minds determined to know the will of God and with a readiness to obey His word, then His message of truth would unite us all, for it centers truly in a crucified, risen, ministering, and soon-coming Saviour.



Note: The historic and Scriptural material explaining this chart is found on pages 99 to 101. The decrees of Cyrus and Darius ordered the building of the temple only. The decree to rebuild the city Artaxerxes issued in 457 B.C., the year the 70-week and the 2300-day prophecies refer to as a starting point.

Measuring the Worshippers, and the Power of the Two Witnesses

THIS chapter is really a continuation of the prophecy of chapter 10. After the prophet had eaten “the little book” which seemed sweet at first but which later became bitter, he was told to “prophesy again” before many peoples and even kings. Revelation 10:11.

Revelation 11:1-14

Then said the angel, “Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.” Revelation 11:1. The temple here mentioned cannot be the church, for the expression “them that worship therein” must refer to the worshippers. Neither could it refer to the temple of Jersualem, for that temple was destroyed years before the Revelation was written, and it has never been rebuilt. (John received this vision about A.D. 96, and the Jewish temple was destroyed by Titus A.D. 70. In any case, the whole Mosaic service was only “a shadow of good things to come” [Hebrews 10:1], and had met its fulfillment in Christ, His sacrifice, and His priesthood in the heavenly sanctuary.) But at the time this prophecy applied (1844), the eyes of the worshippers were especially directed to the ministry of Jesus as our great High Priest in heaven, in “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” Hebrews 8:2.

*International Events Give New Impetus to Study
of Prophecy*

When Pope Pius VI was taken prisoner by General Berthier of France in 1798 and dominance of the church had come to its end, *that shook Europe*. But when this was followed in 1840 by the virtual collapse of the Ottoman Empire, *that shook the world*. Both these events had been clearly foreseen by students of prophecy. The first date, 1798, marked the termination of Daniel's prophecy of the "time, times, and an half" (Daniel 12:7), or the 1260 days, or years, of Revelation 12:6, during which the apostate church would exercise her power. And as has already been emphasized, the second date, 1840, marked the termination of the prophetic periods of the "five months" and also the "hour, and a day, and a month, and a year" (Revelation 9:5, 15) which were given to the Ottoman power. The exactitude of these prophecies and their fulfillment gave new impetus to the whole study of prophecy, and this came at a time when atheism was eating at the very vitals of Christianity.

What John was about to witness, and what he recorded for us, is the battle between the Bible and atheism. This battle reached a climax in the French Revolution. Terrible as that was, it was but a skirmish in comparison with the battle to be waged on a world-wide scale just before the return of Christ. The happenings of that awful revolution have been repeated during recent decades among such groups as the "society of the godless." This prophecy therefore has a particular meaning for earth's last generation.

The Two Witnesses

There has been much speculation as to the identity of these witnesses. Some try to make them literal, even going so far as to name them, declaring they will be as Moses and Elijah. But the whole language is figurative. Verse 4 says, "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of

the earth." In Zechariah 4:11-14, the two olive trees represent the word of God, and God's word is indeed a light. In Psalm 119:105, 130 David said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet," and "The entrance of Thy words giveth light." But the Scriptures are more than a light; they also bear witness or testify of God's grace. Jesus declared that the Old Testament Scriptures "testify [or bear witness] of Me." In Matthew 24:14 we read, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a *witness* unto all nations."

The clearest explanation of this prophecy is that the witnesses are the Old and New Testaments. They do indeed testify of Christ. "They are they which testify of Me," He said. John 5:39.

"The two witnesses represent the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Both are important testimonies to the origin and perpetuity of the law of God. Both are witnesses also to the plan of salvation. The types, sacrifices, and prophecies of the Old Testament point forward to a Saviour to come. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament tell of a Saviour who has come in the exact manner foretold by type and prophecy."

—The Great Controversy, page 267.

But the prophecy declares that the witnesses were to be clothed in sackcloth, the symbol of mourning. The Old and New Testaments were practically silenced, first by the apostasy within the church and later by the attacks of infidelity and rationalism. But each "witness" gave the same testimony; i.e., that for 1260 years the apostasy would vaunt itself, but at the end of the days these Scriptures would speak with new power. References from both the Old and New Testaments covering this 1260-year period will be found in the next chapter, page 119.

The Witnesses Possess Power

In verses 5 and 6 we are told that those who hurt these witnesses will themselves be killed, and will be smitten with the plagues and judgments of God, for these witnesses have power over nature to shut heaven and turn the waters into blood. Moses

warned Israel that if they turned away from God, He would "shut up the heaven, that there be no rain." Deuteronomy 11:16, 17. They did turn from God, and Elijah the prophet was raised up to bring the nation back to God. He commanded that there be no rain, and it did not rain for 3½ years. James 5:17; 1 Kings 17 and 18. It is significant that 3½ years measures 1260 days, or, in prophecy, 1260 years. (A prophetic year is 360 prophetic days, or literal years, so that 3½ prophetic years equals 1260 literal years.)

When atheistic Pharaoh said to Moses, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" he challenged the very God of heaven. Forthwith the rivers of Egypt were turned into blood. That same power resides in the New Testament, for one of the seven last plagues will be the turning of the water into blood. Revelation 16:4.

Modern Militant Atheism Is Born

The same defiant attitude seen in the ruler of ancient Egypt, arose again during the French Revolution when, for the first time in more than 2,000 years, a nation in her capacity as a kingdom "made war on the 'Monarchy of heaven.'" By the legislature of France, the two witnesses, the Old and New Testaments, were figuratively slain in the streets. In 1793 the French assembly passed a decree suppressing the Bible. On November 11 of that year a "Grand Festival" was held in the leading church of Paris in honor of "Reason and Truth," while the authorities attending this burlesque carried out an insulting ceremony. Paris, the center of nationalism, did indeed become a spiritual Sodom, for licentiousness seemed one of its chief characteristics. The city also became a spiritual Egypt, as militant atheism hurled insults at the God of heaven. Such mottoes as "Crush the Wretch" (meaning Christ) were carried through streets that ran with blood. But this was not to last. Godless revelers may make merry for a time, but when men have done their worst the Almighty can always add a closing chapter. And He always does.

The Slain Witnesses Resurrected

The prophet declared that after $3\frac{1}{2}$ prophetic days, or years, the witnesses would come to life again, and, standing on their feet, would cause great fear to fall upon all men. Though the French assembly had passed a decree suppressing the Bible, three years later a decree giving toleration to the Scriptures was passed by the same assembly. The resolution, however, lay on the table for six months, after which "it was taken up and passed without a dissenting vote." This was exactly three and a half years after it had been enacted. How accurate is God's prophetic word!

"The church and the Bible had been slain in France from November, 1793, till June, 1797. The *three years* and a *half* were expended, and the Bible, so long and so sternly repressed before, was placed in honor, and was openly the book of free Protestantism!"—George Croly, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, page 183.

The Bible Exalted

The prophecy says, "And they [the two witnesses] ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them." Revelation 11:12. The Scriptures, so vigorously suppressed by the godless, were to be exalted in the eyes of all nations. It is significant that in 1804, almost immediately following the French Revolution, the British and Foreign Bible Society was organized. At that time the Scriptures were translated into very few languages. Today the word of God can be read in about 1,100 different languages. It is estimated that nine tenths of the nearly 3,000,000,000 people in the world can hear the Bible, or portions of it, read in their own tongue.

Militant atheism, however, did not end with the setting up of the French Republic. The forces of the godless, so dominant in the revolution, spread north and east to find a fertile soil. Even more destitute and downtrodden than the French peasants during the reign of the last kings of France, was the great nation of the far north and east. Religion to them was something that

symbolized make-believe and oppression. Is it any wonder that when that country was plunged into political revolution in 1917, a vital part of that uprising was an attack upon religion? It took nearly a century for the seeds of revolution to reach the full fruitage in Russia. Weishaupt of Germany, in 1776, laid the foundation of a false philosophy which, in one form or another, has since spread around the world.

Measure the Altar and the Worshipers, Revelation 11:1

While the powers of atheism and apostate Christianity are preparing for their last assault on the church, God is sending His last warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Revelation 14:6. Truth, which for centuries has been repressed and submerged by apostate teachers and blatant unbelief, is now shining with a new radiance from the word of God. Special attention has been given to the study of the ministry of Jesus as our great Advocate and Judge. Since He has been appointed by the Father to pass judgment on every soul, it is important that every nation on earth realize that "the hour of His judgment is come," so that men of every language and tribe may prepare to meet their God. The attitude of our worship is the measure of our spiritual power. "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." Revelation 11:14.

The greatest issues of all times are before us. We are on the very borders of the eternal world. How essential, then, that we be found worshiping God in spirit and in truth! The last great battle is soon to be fought: the battle between the forces of light and darkness, truth and error. When the "third woe" comes, it will be forever too late to make our peace with God. "The worldwide dissemination of the same teaching that led to the French Revolution—all tend to involve the whole world in a struggle similar to that which convulsed France."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 228. The only answer to an apostate, atheistic world is a church on fire for God.

The Conflict of the Church

THIS is one of the most illuminating and comprehensive chapters in the book. Gazing in wonder as the whole panorama moves forward, the prophet says, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven." Through the aid of divine imagery he is swept back to witness the very inception of sin, when Lucifer challenged the throne of Deity; then on to Satan's final conflict with Christ's loyal witnesses just prior to His return.

Revelation 12

The activities of the prince of evil against the government of God and His people are presented in this panorama. It is a drama of four acts:

1. The origin of sin and the beginning of the controversy in heaven.
2. The attack on Christ when He lived among men.
3. The persecution of the church in the subsequent centuries.
4. The final war on the remnant people of God.

We are halfway through the book of Revelation. The chapters that follow give remarkable details in the final struggle between the forces of good and evil. The final victory of the church, the overthrow of Satan and his hosts, the complete establishment of God's kingdom upon earth—these themes climax the Revelation.

"A Woman Clothed With the Sun"

The gloriously arrayed woman, with the sun as her garment, the moon as her footstool, and twelve stars for a crown, is in some ways the most attractive of all the prophetic symbols. A woman in prophecy represents a church. The pure, true church of God is represented by a virtuous woman. Jeremiah 6:2; Isaiah 54:5, 6; Hosea 2:19, 20; John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7, 8. The apostate, corrupt church is represented by a lewd woman. Revelation 17:1-5; Jeremiah 3:1, 8; Ezekiel 16:26-29; Isaiah 50:1.

Christ has only one body, His church, and this has existed in all ages. Ancient Israel, while being led by Moses, was spoken of as "the church in the wilderness." Acts 7:38. There has ever been only *one* chosen people, *one* family of the Lord, *one* vineyard, *one* bride, *one* New Jerusalem. The gates of that glorious city bear the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, while the foundations carry the names of the twelve apostles. The whole Bible has but *one* story: the story of the conflict between Christ and His enemy; between the Seed of the woman and the dragon.

"There has really been but one church on earth, existing through all times and under all economies. And so we have here, as the symbol of it, this one glorious woman, in whom all its highest excellences and chief characteristics are summed up from the beginning even unto the great consummation."—J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, vol. 2, p. 277.

"We regard the woman as the symbol of God's religious system on earth from the beginning of His testimony until the consummation."—Davis, *The Vision of Patmos*, page 178.

As Eve was created from the side of Adam during his deep sleep (Genesis 2:21, 22), so Christ, the second Adam, brought His bride, the church, into existence through His death and resurrection. Only as we become members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, are we part of the true church. Ephesians 5:30.

The true church of Jesus Christ has ever been clothed with "The Sun of Righteousness" (Malachi 4:2); Christ Jesus is also

"The Light of the world" (John 8:12; 9:5). Only those who walk in harmony with God's word can be called the "children of light." See Luke 16:8; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8.

"The Moon Under Her Feet"

The moon has no light of its own; it merely reflects the glory of the sun. So it is also with the church. We have no light of ourselves, but merely reflect the glory of Christ, "The Sun of Righteousness." This was beautifully revealed in the ancient Hebrew sanctuary service, which was only "a shadow of good things to come." Hebrews 10:1. Just as coming events cast their shadows before, so the cross of Christ cast a long shadow. It reached from Eden to Calvary.

The church is here revealed as standing on the moon, not in disdain of the Old Testament gospels of Moses and the prophets, but using them rather as a foundation. The everlasting gospel has the same message for all ages. The method of teaching salvation may differ, but men have always been, and can now be, saved from sin by only one way, and that is by the grace of God.

We must not confuse this with the moon goddess of pagan religions. Neither the sun, nor the moon, nor even the woman are objects of worship, but merely symbols. The woman, or the church, is standing on the moon. In Psalm 89:34-37 the Lord declares that His covenant and His word are as faithful and unaltered as the moon. The church was established upon the word of God.

"Upon Her Head a Crown of Twelve Stars"

The crown is a symbol of royalty. The church is called "a royal priesthood." 1 Peter 2:9. As we have noted before, 12 is God's kingdom number. There were 12 tribes in the Old Testament church and 12 apostles in the New Testament church. There are 12 foundations in the New Jerusalem and 12 gates to the city. There will also be 12 thrones in the church triumphant. Matthew 19:27, 28; Luke 22:28-30.

"She Brought Forth a Man-Child"

In Genesis 3:15 we find the first promise of the coming Redeemer. Eve seems to have thought that Cain was the Promised One. Spurrel's translation reads, "I have obtained the man Jehovah." Genesis 4:1. But instead of being the giver of life, Cain became the taker of life. Through all the centuries the devout children of God were looking for the coming Saviour. "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son." Galatians 4:4. And, true to the prophetic word, He came as a helpless babe.

The "Great Red Dragon"

The dragon is clearly stated to be the devil. Verse 9. But in his attack upon God's people he has always worked through earthly persecuting powers, such as ancient Egypt and pagan Rome, both of which are represented in Scripture by this same symbol. See Ezekiel 29:2-4. "The pagan Romans used the image of a dragon on their standards, as well as the eagle. These dragon standards were red. 'The purple standard of the dragon.'"—Ammianus Marcellinus, *History of the Roman Empire*, bk. 16, ch. 12.

This prophecy unmasks the monster and reveals the real power that has hidden behind such earthly kingdoms as Babylon, Tyre, and Rome. In Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 is found the same principle. Behind the kings of Babylon and Tyre was this same power. From Eden to the end of time the slimy trail of the serpent appears. He poisoned the stream of life at the fountain-head, and his deception of the woman was actually an attack upon God. As the enemy of both Christ and His church he is mentioned thirteen times in Revelation.

The Dragon Waiting to Devour the Child

God's promise made to Eve in Eden was cherished by His people. But they waited long for the coming of the promised "Seed"—Christ. Galatians 3:16. The devil also waited, and at

every turn he endeavored to thwart the plan of heaven to save the world. Many times he almost succeeded. Before the Flood *all flesh* was "corrupt," "but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Genesis 6:8.

Then, as the promise of the seed was narrowed at various times, such as to the tribe of Judah and to the family of David, there we find the enemy concentrating his forces. In the days of the Persians a decree was passed by the dictator monarch that the Jews as a nation were to be exterminated; but in spite of all the devil's plots and schemes, the plan of God was fulfilled. The New Testament opens with these triumphant words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham." Matthew 1:1. The Child was born in spite of the overwhelming opposition of the united powers of evil.

When Jesus was born the dragon was there to attack Him. Escape came by fleeing to Egypt. In the wilderness the dragon leaped to the attack, only to be defeated by the word of God. Then all the black passions of hate were let loose at Golgotha. Betrayed and crucified, the world's Redeemer was at last buried in a rock-hewn tomb. How evil triumphed! But only for a few hours. By His death and resurrection Christ "raided the realm of demonism" and shattered the forces of darkness.

"Her Child Was Caught Up Unto God, and to His Throne"

He arose for our justification, and as King of righteousness He now ministers at the throne of grace. Hebrews 4:14; 8:1; 10:12. Who can bring any accusation against the elect of God? As we are justified in Christ and vindicated by His power, nothing now can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:33, 34.

How marvelous all this must have appeared to John! His own persecution, the early martyrdom of his brother James, the execution of Peter and Paul, he could now understand as he watched this unfolding panorama. Then, so that he could comprehend the full significance of the drama of sin and salvation,

the curtain was rolled back, and the past as well as the future was opened to his view.

"There Was War in Heaven"

War did not begin on earth; it began in heaven. And the history of sin is long and ugly. Sin is a mystery for whose presence no excuse can be found. It did not originate on earth, but began in heaven when Lucifer instigated rebellion among the angels. As leader of the heavenly host, he challenged the rulership of God. Isaiah 14:12-15. He was "perfect in beauty" and perfect in character "till iniquity was found in" him. Ezekiel 28:12, 15. Although the most honored of all the angelic host, he became jealous of the Creator, and, coveting His throne, began to sow discord among the angels, thus causing rebellion. "God permitted him [Satan] to demonstrate the nature of his claims, to show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. . . . The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 42.

"Michael and His Angels Fought Against the Dragon"

Peter speaks of "the angels that sinned." 2 Peter 2:4. Some of the angelic host joined Lucifer in his attack against God. These "angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation," God will bring to judgment. Jude 6. John pictures the dragon as deceiving a "third part of the stars of heaven." They joined the forces of rebellion. It was a tragic day when the serpent won the allegiance of Adam and Eve, for this newly created earth then became the battleground of contending forces led by two great generals, Michael and the dragon. Until the death of Christ, Satan was the legal representative of this world. Although he had usurped the kingdom, he was always man's accuser. Job 1:6, 9-11. The conflict between good and evil, therefore, has a far wider range than this visible earth. But sin will come to its end on this planet. Ezekiel 28:18, 19.

"The Accuser of Our Brethren Is Cast Down,"
Revelation 12:10

This mighty spiritual combat reached a new climax when Christ hung upon the cross. All heaven "watched the battle between light and darkness as it waxed stronger. And as Christ in His expiring agony upon the cross cried out, 'It is finished,' a shout of triumph rang through every world, and through heaven itself. The great contest that had been so long in progress in this world was now decided, and Christ was conqueror. His death had answered the question whether the Father and the Son had sufficient love for man to exercise self-denial and a spirit of sacrifice. Satan had revealed his true character as a liar and a murderer. It was seen that the very same spirit with which he had ruled the children of men who were under his power, he would have manifested if permitted to control the intelligences of heaven. With one voice the loyal universe united in extolling the divine administration."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 69, 70.

When Christ arose from the grave, He then became the rightful representative of this world. His death reconciled the world to God, and the accuser, the devil, has no more claim to it. No wonder a shout was heard in heaven! Moreover, the inhabitants of heaven speak of the devil as "the accuser of *our* brethren." The elders knew something of his power, for they, too, had met him in mortal combat. The accuser and deceiver was finally cast down from his place of usurpation, and Christ, the second Adam, became our representative. Verses 10, 12.

"Woe to the Inhabiters of the Earth!"

And now is revealed the underlying cause of the great struggles of the church. The devil, knowing he has lost the battle against God, and recognizing that his time is short, is now concentrating all his power upon the followers of Christ. The prophet was shown this enemy of God and man persecuting the woman—the church. Up until the time of Christ's death Satan was eager to

get other worlds to join him in rebellion. But now he is defeated. See *The Desire of Ages*, page 758. So he transfers all his energy to combating the church. To escape the attacks of the enemy, she flees to the place God has prepared for her, where she is nourished for 1260 prophetic days, or years. This period is mentioned seven times in Daniel and in the Revelation: (1) Daniel 7:25; (2) Daniel 12:7; (3) Revelation 11:2; (4) Revelation 11:3; (5) Revelation 12:6; (6) Revelation 12:14; (7) Revelation 13:5. It began, as we have seen, with the decree of Justinian in A.D. 538, and ended with the overthrow of papal dominion in 1798. Secluded places, such as the Piedmont valleys and the Alpine mountain fastnesses, even the friendly land of young America, all became havens of refuge for the persecuted people of God.

**"The Serpent Cast Out of His Mouth Water,"
Revelation 12:15**

Water in prophecy represents people: Revelation 17:15. During the papal supremacy, many different peoples were used in an endeavor to destroy the true, faithful people of God. History's pages are stained with the blood of bitter persecutions and ruthless massacres. But all failed to destroy the people of God. On the contrary, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

Heaven rejoices in the victory of the saints over the dragon's power. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Revelation 12:11. But the prophet watches as another and more subtle attempt is made to destroy the church. The enemy casts out of his mouth a flood to carry the woman away. Truly a flood of false teachers steeped in evolution and human philosophy has arisen to oppose the truth of God. This is especially so since the end of the 1260 years. The water was coming from the *mouth* of the serpent. What he failed to accomplish by armies and persecution, he seeks to attain by an army of false educators. Lying propaganda and "science falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20) will reach their climax in the final battle against truth.

"The Earth Opened Her Mouth"

To meet this new attack, "the earth opened her mouth." Through the centuries the earth helped the woman by providing a refuge for the persecuted people of God. But this new attack coming from the mouth of the serpent has been overcome in another way. A century ago the new science of archaeology came into being, and from the buried cities of the past, evidence piles on evidence confirming the accuracy of the Bible records. Marvelous discoveries in the fields of archaeology, history, and geology have all substantiated and vindicated the word of God. The Rosetta Stone, discovered in 1799, became the key to the past. It enabled scholars to learn the ancient Egyptian languages, thus opening the whole story of the ancients. Thousands of discoveries have been made in substantiation of Biblical history. The earth has indeed opened her mouth, and the very stones are crying out in the ears of this skeptic age, "Thy word is truth."

"The Dragon Was Wroth, . . . and Went to Make War With the Remnant," Verse 17

Satan's final and greatest attempt will be made on the very last church, called in this chapter "the remnant of her seed." These loyal ones, obedient to "the commandments of God" and having "the testimony of Jesus," stand as faithful witnesses.

"From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven, it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his rebellion against the Creator; and though he was cast out of heaven, he has continued the same warfare upon the earth. . . . The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God."—*The Great Controversy*, page 582.

In every great crisis of history God has had faithful servants whose allegiance to Him was more precious than life. The prophet Isaiah, writing at a time when truth was being compromised,

spoke of those who were loyal to God as His "remnant." See Zephaniah 3:12, 13; Micah 4:7.

In the last great crisis of the ages God will have a loyal "remnant" who by His grace will stand for truth and righteousness. John describes them as those that "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus," which the angel declared "is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 12:17; 19:10. Through His word and the counsels of His Spirit God is even now preparing that "remnant" to stand "in the evil day" when principalities and powers and "the rulers of the darkness of this world" will make their last attack upon the church. Ephesians 6:12, 13. See also 2 Thessalonians 2:9-13.

It is through this "remnant" that God is giving His last message of mercy to the world and revealing at the same time the machinations of the "man of sin" whose counterfeit system of salvation has obscured the glorious gospel of Christ and His saving grace. The church that is "waiting for the coming of our Lord" will "come behind in no gift," says the apostle Paul. 1 Corinthians 1:7. God has His servants in every land of earth. These He is gathering by the power of the everlasting gospel as it is heralded to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Revelation 14:6. This is clearly expressed in the following quotation from Ellen G. White:

"Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and of South America, in China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 188, 189.

The Beast From the Sea, and the Man With the Mystic Number 666

HOW quickly the scenes change in this Apocalyptic portrayal! John still watches enraptured as the drama of the ages unfolds. As the prophet now scans the restless sea, suddenly before his startled gaze there arises from the water a hideous wild beast. In vision Daniel also saw beasts arise as symbols of powerful earthly kingdoms. See Daniel 7.

It was the dragon power, Rome, that gave the beast of Revelation 13 its seat (Greek, *thronos*) and great authority. John tells us this beast power would utter blasphemy against God. Revelation 13:1, 5. Domitian, who banished John to Patmos, issued state papers under the blasphemous title of "Emperor Domitian, Our Lord and Our God." It was this pagan power that gave the beast its authority. Let us take our places beside John and view these tremendous scenes in the great revelation of redemption as he saw them opened in the judgment.

"The Beast With Seven Heads and Ten Horns"

Some, because of the similarity of language in John's and Daniel's descriptions, claim that John was only borrowing from Daniel. Daniel, actually, was looking forward into history yet to come. He saw a succession of powers arising. First there was the lion kingdom (Babylon), then the bear (Persia), then the

leopard (Greece), then the ten-horned beast (Rome). All these characteristics are embodied in this beast of Revelation 13. It is therefore a composite symbol of the kingdoms of this world over which Satan has exercised dominion.

John, who was living six hundred years later than Daniel, viewed those same powers but from a different perspective. He was looking both *backward* and *forward*. Though Rome was the ruling power, nevertheless so much of Greek civilization was preserved in the empire that we speak of it as Greco-Roman. The prophetic symbol combines the ten-horned head of Rome with the leopard body of Greece. But the beast also embodies features of the former kingdoms of Persia and Babylon, for it had the feet of the bear (Persia) and the mouth of the lion (Babylon). Both Daniel and John emphasized the ten horns—the subsequent divisions of Rome.

Dragon Gives Beast His "Power," His "Seat" (Throne), and "Authority," Verse 2

The dragon—the devil and Satan (Revelation 12:9)—always works through earthly kingdoms and institutions. Ancient Egypt was likened to the dragon. Ezekiel 29:3. But the application in Revelation 12 is definitely to pagan Rome, the power that sought to destroy the Child Jesus as soon as He was born. Pagan Rome collapsed later and was replaced by Christianized Rome or the papacy. The ancient city of Rome became the capital and center of authority for this new and growing power. In A.D. 330 Constantine left Rome to build Constantinople, the new capital. This might be called the beginning of the breakup of the empire. Constantinople later became the capital of Eastern Rome.

Many writers reveal the way the transference from pagan Rome to papal Rome was made. Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine* declares, "In order to render Christianity more attractive to the Gentiles, the priests adopted the exterior vestments and ornaments used in the pagan cult."

Pope Gregory, instructing Augustine, is credited with saying:

"Destroy the idols, never the temples. Sprinkle them with holy water, place in them relics, and let the nations worship in the places they are accustomed to." Cardinal Baronius is said to have made the statement, "The Holy Church was permitted to appropriate the rites and ceremonies used by the pagans in their idolatrous cult since she [the Church] expiated them by her consecration." These are indicative of the attitude of the Roman Church at that time. Compromise was its constant characteristic, while truth was tragically sacrificed on the altars of form and liturgy.

Pontifex Maximus

Constantine, foreseeing the ultimate triumph of Christianity, became its champion. As emperor, he was already invested with the power and honors of paganism. These he did not renounce, but, instead, brought them over into Christianity. He therefore became the bridge uniting paganism with Christianity. Half a century later, A.D. 375, the Christian emperor Gratian refused the pagan vestments and the pagan title "Pontifex Maximus." But the bishop of Rome, seeing an opportunity to exalt his dignity, assumed the title and vestments of Pontifex Maximus.

As we have already noted in Chapter 3, "pontifex" comes from two Latin words, *pons* (nominative) or *pontis* (genitive), meaning bridge; and *factio*, I make, or *factor*, maker. *Maximus* means the greatest. Putting these meanings together, we get "The Greatest Bridge Builder," or "Bridge Collector," as of a toll. This was the historic title of the high priest of paganism. These titles and vestments perpetuated paganism in the church, but always under the disguise of Christianity. A former Roman Catholic bishop, who, prior to his acceptance of the full faith of Jesus, was professor of church history in one of the main theological seminaries in Rome, pointed out that one reason for acceptance of the title was that a toll could be demanded of all who entered the city of Rome. It is claimed that this toll collection continued until the year 1870. (See pages 23-25.)

666—The Number of the Beast, Revelation 13:18

This mystic number represented a system, rather than an individual man. The dragon, or the serpent,—paganism,—gave the beast “his power, and his seat [or throne], and great authority.” Revelation 13:2.

Paganism is largely a religion of nature worship, the sun and the moon being prominent deities; the sun usually the male deity and the moon often the female deity. In ancient mythology the serpent was universally the symbol of the sun. Sun worship and serpent worship began side by side, the *sun* being hailed as the source of all *physical life*, the *serpent* as the source of all *spiritual life*.

The serpent, however, was certainly not the source of spiritual life, for the Bible declares that the serpent was the *deceiver* of mankind and so *robbed man of his spiritual life*. Aesculapius the ancient god of medicine, was often represented by a serpent entwining itself around a dead tree trunk, symbol of the restorer of life. (See Appendix, page 215, No. 6.)

The ancients claimed that God works by mathematics. Their religion was a conglomeration of religion, astrology, alchemy, physical and mental science, and mathematics. Ancient astrology divided the starry heavens into 36 constellations. These were represented by different amulets called “Sigilla Solis,” or the sun seal. These amulets were worn by the pagan priests, and they contained all the numbers from 1 to 36. By these figures they claimed to be able to foretell future events. These amulets were usually made of gold, yellow being the sun color. While being carried, these amulets were wrapped in yellow silk, as it was thought that the bearer would thus receive the beneficent powers believed to emanate from the jewel.

These drawings from photographs taken in 1910, show actual amulets then in the Berlin Museum. They reveal the veneration the ancients had for the sun-god. On the front side of No. 1 we see the god of the sun standing on the lion. This indicated the



Number 1.



Number 2.

Amulets worn by pagan sun-worshiping priests.

6	32	3	34	35	1
7	11	27	28	8	30
19	14	16	15	23	24
18	20	22	21	17	13
25	29	10	9	26	12
36	5	33	4	2	31

1	32	34	3	35	6
30	8	27	28	11	7
20	24	15	16	13	23
19	17	21	22	18	14
10	26	12	9	29	25
31	4	2	33	5	36

Diagram of mystic numbers.

sun's position in the constellation of Leo during the hot days of August. On the back is inscribed "Nachyel," meaning "intelligence of the sun," and in 36 squares are arranged the numerals 1 to 36 (see diagram) in such a way that adding the numbers of any column either horizontally or vertically, and also the two diagonals crossing the square, the total is the same—111. The sum of the six columns, computed either horizontally or vertically, is 6×111 , or 666.

The second illustration is also a solar seal, but it honors the star Basilisco, which was the diminutive form of the Greek *basileus* (king), thus meaning the same as the Latin *regulus*. Now, Regulus is the only first-magnitude star in the constellation of Leo. The sun and the moon are again clearly seen on this amulet, and on the reverse side is the same arrangement of numerals, with the actual figure given of the total, 666.

After the empire of Babylon fell, the whole system of Egyptian and Babylonian mythology was transferred to Pergamos in Asia Minor. (See page 24.) Later it was brought over to the city of Rome. (See map, chapter 3.) No wonder the Lord, writing to the church in Pergamos, said, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even where Satan's seat is.*" Revelation 2:13.

The corrupting system of idolatry through which the church departed from the faith is called by Paul "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thessalonians 2:7), and by John, "Mystery, Babylon the Great" (Revelation 17:5). Already working in the days of the apostles, the full revelation of this apostasy was yet to be revealed. The Babylonian mysteries, always shrouded in secrecy, have from the most ancient times challenged God's truth. Paul speaks of "the unfruitful works of darkness," declaring that "it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." Ephesians 5:11, 12.

When the Son of God was nailed to a cross it seemed as if evil had triumphed. But our Lord "endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2), the cross being the symbol of this shameful cult.

This mystery-god mentioned by Plutarch as "the hidden god," (*De Iside et Osiride*, vol. 2, p. 354) and by others as "the hidden system," was worshiped under the name "Saturn," which means "to lie hid." In the Chaldaic or Aramaic it is spelled "S-t-u-r." Chambers, in his *Book of Days*, speaks of "the festival of St. Satur, the martyr." (See next page.) This "hidden system" of shame and apostasy invaded the church in the early centuries, and has left its trail of corruption on every succeeding generation. The true God is not "hidden;" He is revealed in Jesus Christ.

Now let us note the significance of the letters S T U R :

S - 200	
T - 60	"The Hidden God" of Babylonia
U - 400	(Aramaic Language)
R - 6	
	<hr/>
	666

When this system was established in Rome, "City of the Seven Hills," Italy became the land of the mystery cults and was for centuries known as "Saturnian Land," or the Land of Mystery. Saturn was also identical with Janus, the Grand Mediator and Opener and Shutter. And the high priests of paganism were invested with the keys of Janus and Cybele.

Christianity Challenges Paganism

When the Christian church began, the simplicity of the apostolic message was a strange contrast from the elaborate system of pagan mysteries. That a sinner could come directly into the presence of God and find salvation without the mediation of a whole system of priests and incantations seemed almost too good to be true. That simple message produced a purity of life. Men were different. They acted differently; there was a joy and peace which could not be gainsaid. Paul spoke of "the mystery of godliness" (1 Timothy 3:16) which embraced the Incarnation of our Lord, His blameless life, His ascension, and His ministry at the throne of Deity. What a contrast with the "mystery of iniquity"!

2 Thessalonians 2:7. Apart from the gospel of Christ men could not have victory over sin. The Christian message was a call out of the darkness of the whole system of pagan mysteries. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," wrote Paul, "for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." **Ephesians 5:11, 12.** And that was all too tragically true. The secret mysteries were often a cloak for debasing immorality.

The apostles, foreseeing that the pagan system would corrupt the simplicity of the gospel, warned the leaders of the churches. But little by little, despite their warnings, the church suffered "a falling away" (**2 Thessalonians 2:3**) and paganism became completely established in the apostate church. That branch of Christianity, at least, became not "the daughter of Zion," as God's ancient church was called, but, instead, "the daughter of paganism," with headquarters in Rome. All the vestments of paganism became a part of the so-called Christian system. For example, the "keys of St. Peter," found on the papal coat of arms and worn by the pope, the head of the system, are not the keys of St. Peter, but are the modern counterpart of the pagan keys of Janus and Cybele. Many of the church festivals are pagan, as, for example, the festival of St. Satur, the martyr, held on the 29th day of March. See R. Chambers, *The Book of Days*, vol. 1, p. 435. One of the prayers in the litany of the mass is, "God HIDDEN, and my Saviour, have mercy upon us,"—W. MacGavin, *The Protestant*, vol. 2, p. 79. Saturn was the "hidden god" of paganism. No wonder God calls the system "*Mystery, Babylon the Great.*" **Revelation 17:5.**

Both the *name* and the *number* of his name are significant to the student of the Revelation, yet only by the wisdom of God can we know the apostate one designated. Therefore we seek the guidance of our God as we unfold this divine secret. Accepting God's challenge to discover the significance of this number 666, we would be as men searching for the hidden things of God, rather than as children playing with conundrums. The dignity of the Apocalypse, while demanding our sober search, also

demands a diligence that is rarely revealed in commentaries and books written on the Revelation. This mystic number was given the prophet John by the Holy Spirit, its secret to be revealed to those only who possess the wisdom of God. Many names have been suggested through the centuries, some too ridiculous to merit comment. This has led some to bypass the issue as if it deserved no further thought. But God says: "Let him that hath understanding [not the wisdom of the serpent, but the wisdom of God] count the number." As obedient servants we have sought "the wisdom that is from above" (James 3:17), and our discoveries lead to some tremendous conclusions.

The *sacred language* of that church has been for centuries by decree, not Greek or Hebrew, but Latin. When the pope speaks *ex cathedra*, he speaks in Latin. Until recently the mass was always said in Latin. The ancient Greek word for "the Latin-speaking man" is *Lateinos*, which from very early times

L - 30	H - 0
A - 1	Ē - 8
T - 300	L - 30
E - 5	A - 1
I - 10	T - 300
N - 50	I - 10
O - 70	N - 50
S - 200	"The Latin Kingdom"
<hr/>	(Greek Language)
666	B - 2 (Greek Language)
	A - 1
	S - 200
	I - 10
	L - 30
	E - 5
	I - 10
	A - 1
	<hr/>
	666

The computation appearing in the second column is significant. The Greek for "the Latin Kingdom" is HĒ LATINE BASILEIA, which also numbers 666.

has been recognized as the name denoted in Revelation 13:18. E. B. Elliott, in his *Horae Apocalypticæ*, says: "But that which alone completely answers to *every* requirement of the sacred enigma, and which I, therefore fully believe to be the one intended by the Spirit is Irenaeus' solution, LATEINOS." —Fourth ed., vol. 3, p. 233. (The letter "E" is usually omitted in the more modern spelling of the word, but such authorities as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Andreas, and others spell it as set forth here.) This title has also the same numerical significance in the Greek.

As previously mentioned, Italy was for a long time known as the "Land of Mystery" or "Saturnian Land." When the Italian branch of the Christian church pushed its way into the ascendancy and sought control of the church universal or the Catholic Church, it became the *Roman* Catholic Church or the church of Italy. And it is significant that this name in Greek—ITALIKA EKKLESIA—the "Italian Church" also counts up to 666.

I - 10	E - 5	
T - 300	K - 20	
A - 1	K - 20	
L - 30	L - 30	"Italian Church"
I - 10	Ē - 8	(Greek Language)
K - 20	S - 200	
A - 1	I - 10	
	A - 1	
		<hr/>
	372	294

The head of the apostate church came into possession of a temporal kingdom when Pepin conferred upon Pope Stephen II the first grant of the Papal States in A.D. 755. The Roman pontiff then became a temporal sovereign and remained such for eleven centuries. But he was deprived of these states in 1870 when Italy was united by Garibaldi during the reign of King Victor Emmanuel II.

The pope, however, remained in the Vatican as a self-styled

"prisoner" until February 11, 1929, when Mussolini restored to the supreme pontiff a fragment of the former domains, giving him about 180 acres. That restoration made him a "king" again, and the number of his kingdom is 666. Greek scholars have tested the names of some 400 other kingdoms, not one of which amounts in its number to the precise value of this mystic number—666.

Papal Admissions

But 666 is also *the number of a man*: the representative of the power. Revelation 13:18. The Roman Catholic Bible, the Douay Version, contains a special footnote on Revelation 13:18 which reads, "The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number." There are many names and titles assumed by the Roman pontiff, but one of the most significant is VICARIUS FILII DEI, meaning the Vicar of the Son of God. This title is incorporated in the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church. "Beatus Petrus in terris vicarius filii Dei videtur esse constitutus."—*Decretum Gratiani*, prima pars., dist. 96.

"The title *Vicarius Filii Dei* . . . is very common as the title for the Pope."—Dr. J. Quaston, S.T.D., professor of ancient history and Christian archaeology, School of Sacred Theology, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., March 5, 1943. This title was confirmed by a church council, according to Binius, a Roman Catholic dignitary of Cologne. See *Sacrosancta Concilia*, vol. 1, pp. 1539-1541.

"The title of the Pope of Rome is Vicarius Filii Dei, and if you take the letters of his title which represent Latin numerals (printed large) and add them together, they come to 666."—*Our Sunday Visitor*, Nov. 15, 1914.

It is to no purpose merely to multiply names and count the numerals. While many names have been seized upon through the centuries in an effort to interpret this prophecy, yet too often it has meant little more than idle speculation. We repeat, the challenge is not to the mathematician as such, nor to the philosopher with his worldly wisdom, but to the servant of God who

earnestly seeks for "that wisdom that is from above." James 3:17.

The title below is particularly significant as the climax to our investigation. Note its computation:

V - 5	F - o	
I - 1	I - 1	
C - 100	L - 50	
A - 0	I - 1	"Vicarius Filii Dei"
R - 0	I - 1	One of the pope's official
I - 1	D - 500	titles. (Latin Language)
U - 5	E - 0	
S - 0	I - 1	
		<u>666</u>

It surely is significant that through all the changing centuries from ancient Babylon to modern Babylon, the power that has corrupted the truth of God is branded with the number 666! When Babylon is mentioned in God's word the number 6 is strangely prominent. Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold, for example, was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide. And there were 6 different musical instruments in his "jazz band" when the loyal Hebrews refused to worship that symbol of Babylonian greatness. Daniel 3. In chapter 4 the "tree" that represented Babylonian power is mentioned just 6 times. Belshazzar met his doom while praising the gods of "gold," "silver," "brass," "iron," "wood," and "stone"—6 in all. Daniel 5:4. In the Revelation the name Babylon occurs just 6 times. In Lucifer's defiance of God, the personal pronoun "I" or "my" is used 6 times. Isaiah 14:13, 14. Also in the story of the building of the tower of Babel or Babylon (see page 153), the personal pronoun "us" or "we" is used just 6 times.

Anciently the Jew believed there was "a doom upon the number 6 even when it stood alone. Triple it; . . . you obtain three mysterious sixes following one another, 666; and we have represented a potency of evil than which there can be none greater,

a direfulness of fate than which there can be none worse."—William Milligan, in *The Expositor's Bible*, vol. 6, p. 890.

To the Jew, 6 was the number of unrest or the number of man, who was created on the sixth day; 7 was the number of perfection; and 8 the number of victory. If a number was tripled, it indicated the eternity of the thing symbolized; for example, 666 meant *eternal unrest*; 777, *eternal perfection*; 888, *eternal victory*.

Thus, *he phren*, "the natural mind"—8, 500, 100, 8, 50>equals 666, the number of perpetual unrest. (King Solomon found it so in his experience, for his annual income was 666 talents of gold, a fabulous income but wholly unsatisfying to the heart! See 1 Kings 10:14; Ecclesiastes 2:8-11, 17.)

Stauros, the "cross"—6, 1, 400, 100, 70, 200>equals 777, the number of eternal perfection. So the apostle Paul found it. See Galatians 6:14.

Iesous, the divinely given name of Jesus—10, 8, 200, 70, 400, 200>equals 888. And this is the number of endless victory!

The fact that the papal number is identical with the sacred number of the ancient pagan sun-god *is* significant. Against this system of deception, God has spoken in no uncertain language. He calls it "Babylon," or "confusion." And His message today is, "Come out of her, My people." Revelation 18:1-4. His true church will be victorious. They will stand on the sea of glass singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, the song of victory "over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." Revelation 15:1-4. Through a greater Name (Jesus) they have conquered sin, for "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. God hath "given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Philippians 2:9, 10. "All hail the power of Jesus' name!"

The Collapse of Intolerance, and the Rise of America

WHEN paganism invaded the church, it brought with it not only its vestments and mysteries, but also its spirit of intolerance. When man ceases to rule by love, he resorts to force.

Revelation 13:3-7

The Church Loses Her Mission in the World. When the early church began to lose her “first love,” she also lost her vision. When she entered politics, she fell from her high spiritual estate. Instead of continuing as a mighty missionary movement concerned only with the carrying of the good news of a free salvation to all men everywhere, she began to build herself into a great financial institution with the avowed objective of ruling the nations. Then instead of looking forward to the return of Christ, accompanied by His angels with power and great glory, as the consummation of her hopes, this apostate church began to teach that her mission in the world was to establish herself as the political leader of the world, and through a so-called spiritual rulership usher in the kingdom of God on the earth. This concept of the church and her work was a complete reversal of the apostolic message. Augustine’s book, *The City of God*, interpreted Revelation 20 to mean that the church would rule the nations.

The Church Becomes an Established Institution

In the days of the apostles the church made tremendous spiritual conquests. She truly "went forth conquering, and to conquer." But a change came. Paul spoke of that coming change as the "falling away." This apostasy, he said, would give rise to "that man of sin" who, while exalting himself above all that is called God, and sitting as a ruler in the temple of God, and even claiming to be God, would, in the guise of Christianity, corrupt the truth and oppose any who differed with him. 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4.

The Beast Arises From the Sea

The decline of spiritual power within the established church was not sudden. Church history traces the tragic steps which finally placed civil and religious authority in one hand. Power-hungry popes boasting the title, "God's vicegerent on earth," usurped the prerogatives of Deity. Purporting to be the successors of Peter, they claimed authority, not over the church alone, but over the entire world. For example, Innocent III (pope, 1198-1216) wrote that "as the sun and moon are placed in the firmament, the greater as the light of day and the lesser of the night, so there are two powers on earth, the greater the pontifical and the lesser the royal." Making and unmaking kings was the pastime of pontiffs. Trampling on the rights of conscience, these medieval rulers dominated princes, states, and parliaments, compelling submission through the most horrible engine of tyranny, the Inquisition. Plotting and scheming to gain more power, this dominating church continued to "wear out the saints of the Most High," and attempted to change God's law. Daniel 7:25. And this was to continue for forty-two months.

This prophetic period (see page 119) John has already introduced five times and in three different ways, while Daniel speaks of it twice. One method of expression used by both John and Daniel is "a time, and times, and half a time." Revelation 12:14;

Daniel 7:25; 12:7. A "time" was a Hebrew way of expressing a year. See Daniel 4:16; 11:13, margin. The calculation is clear and convincing—

1 "time" would equal 1 year, or	360 days
2 "times" would equal 2 years, or	720 days
$\frac{1}{2}$ "time" would equal $\frac{1}{2}$ year, or	<u>180 days</u>
	Total 1260 days

The expression "forty and two months" is arresting. A prophetic month consists of thirty days. So forty-two months multiplied by thirty would give us 1260 days. Biblical authorities agree that in prophecy a day represents a year. Commencing with the decree of Justinian in A.D. 538, this extended to 1798. Two and a half centuries before this significant date, Europe was being rocked by revolution—a revolution of ideas stemming largely from the Protestant Reformation. Nation after nation severed their allegiance to ecclesiastical authority.

Bible prophecy foretold not only the rise of the papacy, but also her downfall. This power which pretended to speak for Christ was actually speaking against Him. Every Reformer without exception spoke of this apostate church as "antichrist." Now the word "anti" means "against" and "rivalry or supplanting." The papacy fulfills both ideas, as the leaders of the sixteenth century Reformation so ably set forth. But the arrogant and blasphemous power was nearing the end of her allotted period of dominance, and political events were shaping up for her collapse. Napoleon, one of the most powerful figures of history, began with rapid strides to change the face of Europe. And it was during the Napoleonic wars that the papal head of this beast conglomerate (Revelation 13) was "as it were wounded to death." Verse 3. "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." Verse 10. In 1798 General Berthier, by no means a strong general, took Pope Pius VI prisoner. The pope was exiled until his death a year later; during this time there was no ruling pope. With what

remarkable precision the prophetic period of 1260 years was completely fulfilled!

John, however, not only foretold her wounding and her captivity, but also declared that her deadly wound would be healed. Then, he said, "all the world wondered after the beast" (verse 3)—a truly remarkable prediction. When Italy was united under Garibaldi's revolution (1866-1870) the church was stripped of even her lands, leaving the pope a virtual prisoner in the Vatican. Fifty-nine years later, on February 11, 1929, the famous concordat signed by Mussolini and Cardinal Gaspari restored a part of these lands, since which time the pope has been a king again among the sovereigns of earth. The official church reporter, describing this history-making event, said, "We are now witnessing the signing of this document. As the ink flows from these pens it is *healing the wound* of fifty-nine years."

Even the most casual observer is compelled to recognize the rapid growth and international prestige and power of the Roman Catholic Church. She is today exercising a greater influence on world affairs than at any time in her long and checkered history. And more and more is her influence being felt in the United States.

"Another Beast Coming Up Out of the Earth"

At the time the ten-horned beast received its deadly wound (1798), another power was seen to arise. Revelation 13:11-17. The first beast was from the "sea;" the second came up from the "earth." The sea represents "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17:15), a true picture of Europe, where the papal beast arose. The *earth* must represent, not a crowded country of diverse nations, but a sparsely populated and isolated area. And where was there such a place? Certainly not in Europe or Asia. True to the prophecy, something tremendous was happening across the Atlantic. A century and a half before this time, colonies had begun to spring up in America. By 1776 these colonies had bound themselves together and were waging

the Revolutionary War, severing themselves from Europe. Thus the foundation was laid for a completely new nation.

Following the war the Constitution was framed and ratified, going into effect in 1789. In the same year the French Revolution broke out, causing an upheaval not only in France, but throughout Europe. This brought an end to the Holy Roman Empire. The downfall of the first beast from the sea marked the rise of the beast from the earth. And it came up in a land far removed from the "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" of the Old World. John Wesley, interpreting this prophecy about 1760, said, "He is not yet come, though he cannot be far off. For he is to appear at the end of the forty-two months of the first beast."—*Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 17th ed., p. 704. The Greek word *anabainō* means to come up quietly, unobtrusively, but quickly, as a springing vegetable. And that is how America arose. One historian says, "Like a silent seed we grew into an empire."

"Two Horns Like a Lamb"

Horns denote power, as we have already observed, the ten horns of the wild beast from the sea representing the ten divisions of ancient Rome. This new beast has not ten, but two horns, lamblike, innocent, even Christian in appearance. How representative of the two great cornerstones of the American Republic—civil and religious liberty, or Republicanism and Protestantism. Those founding fathers of the new nation wanted "a country without a king, and a church without a pope." And their ideals were embodied in the Constitution which, declared Gladstone, one of the greatest prime ministers of England, is "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man."

That Constitution which so definitely separates church and state was the fruit of a long struggle for liberty and also of an intensive study of great minds. Its greatness lies in this: It protects the divine right of man against the so-called right of kings

and dictators; it permits Congress to establish a court, but not a religion; to suppress an insurrection, but not a newspaper; to close a port, but not her citizens' mouths; to regulate commerce, but not a church; to take a vacation, but not to take her citizens' property. It stands as a buffer between freedom and despotism. It is a stumbling block in the path of ambitious and designing men who would destroy true liberty. It protects the weak against the strong, the minority against the majority. It upholds the sovereignty of the individual.

The population of the colonies was, at the time of the Declaration of Independence, not more than 3,000,000. But today it has reached 210,000,000. In 1776 the land area of the states was only 500,000 square miles; today it is 3,615,000 square miles. America indeed came up at the right *time* and in the right *way*, and she has done the *very things* prophecy stated would be her history. But no statesman, even fifty years ago, would have dared to predict the international role the United States is playing today. "Isolation" and "noninterference" seem outmoded phrases in her foreign policy. Yet these were the demands even three decades ago.

"He Spake as a Dragon"

The illustrious history of the United States would seem to make impossible the rise of intolerance. But God's word declares that this country, which has been the very cradle of liberty, will yet speak with the voice of a dictator, exercising "all the power of the first beast" and compelling men "to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." Revelation 13:12. How slow we are to learn the lessons of history.

Edwin Burke, speaking before the House of Commons in 1784, declared, "People never give up their liberties but under some delusion." Benjamin Franklin said, "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety." Daniel Webster emphasizes the same truth by declaring, "God grants liberty only to those who love it,

and are always ready to guard and defend it." All too many in lands where liberty prevails seem to take freedom for granted, forgetting the price paid in sacrifice and blood.

Liberty Endangered

The very freedom of the United States makes it possible for organizations that are alien to freedom to undermine the principles of liberty. Some who reside in America do not share the principles of true Americanism. Under the guise of "protectors," certain groups are working to get control. Some who recognize this are urging that the government be made stronger. But, therein lies the danger. When government becomes the master instead of the servant, personal freedom can disappear overnight. Liberties are safeguarded by citizens, not by politics. The future freedom of America depends upon every citizen's becoming aware of the real issues at stake. When there is so much fog in the political atmosphere, it is easy to be misunderstood, and to be concerned is to run the risk of being looked upon as an alarmist. But the issues of the future are too vital to remain silent.

They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

—James Russell Lowell.

While liberty is often the most costly possession, it is also the most fragile, and "eternal vigilance" is its price. Liberty is the very heart of the gospel. "The truth shall make you free," declared Jesus, and His freedom is not license, but liberty. False liberty is a man's freedom to do what he likes, but true liberty is a man's freedom to do what he ought. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," declares the apostle Paul. 2 Corinthians 3:17.

Efforts to Amend the Constitution

Even before the dawn of the century, such organizations as the National Reform Association, the International Reform Federation, and the Lord's Day Alliance were working tirelessly to insert changes which, although appearing harmless, could completely destroy freedom. Notice these statements from an official source at that time: "To secure such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will . . . indicate that this is a Christian nation, and place all the Christian laws, institutions, and usages of our government on an undeniably legal basis in the fundamental law of the land."—David McAllister, *The National Reform Movement, . . . a Manual of Christian Civil Government*, "Article II of Constitution," 1898 ed., pp. 15, 16.

"We cordially, gladly, recognize the fact that in South American Republics, and in France and other European countries, the Roman Catholics are the recognized advocates of national Christianity, and stand opposed to all the proposals of secularism. . . . Whenever they are willing to co-operate in resisting the progress of political atheism, we will gladly join hands with them in a World's Conference for the promotion of National Christianity,—which ought to be held at no distant day—many countries could be represented only by Roman Catholics."—*Christian Statesman* (official organ of the National Reform Association), Dec. 11, 1884, p. 2. We quote these to show that the determination to have changes made in the Constitution is not new. The rapid growth of Roman Catholic influence in this country makes the situation the more alarming.

"On September 7, 1947, Pope Pius XII declared that 'the time for reflection and planning is past' in religious and moral fields and the 'time for action' has arrived.' He said that 'the battle in religious and moral fields hinged on five points: Religious culture, *the sanctifying of Sunday*, the saving of the Christian family, social justice and loyalty and truthfulness in dealings.'"—*Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), Sept. 8, 1947.

With the 1961 decision of the Supreme Court of the United States declaring state Sunday-closing laws to be Constitutional, a long step was taken toward "the sanctifying of Sunday." Protestants have for many years sought Sunday enforcement deliberately as religious legislation and indirectly as welfare legislation. Of late the Catholic voice has also been heard, so that Protestants and Catholics have joined forces in bringing about a more favorable legal environment for Sunday observance. This decision paves the way for more stringent state laws and an eventual national law.

No one should be denied the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, but the history of the papacy where she has gained control should lead all thoughtful citizens to view with real concern the present trend. Some groups are aware of the danger of these demanded changes, as is evidenced in such statements as this:

"If Congress shall declare the first day of the week holy, it will not convince the Jew nor the Sabbatarian. It will dissatisfy both, and, consequently, convert neither. . . . If a solemn act of legislation shall, in *one* point, define the law of God, or point out to the citizen *one* religious duty, it may, with equal propriety, proceed to define *every* part of divine revelation, and enforce *every* religious obligation, even to the forms and ceremonies of worship, the endowment of the church, and the support of the clergy. . . .

"The framers of the Constitution recognized the eternal principle that man's relation with his God is above human legislation, and his rights of conscience inalienable."—*Sunday Mail*, U.S. House Reports, vol. 2, No. 271, pp. 1-4.

Growth of Catholicism

At the beginning of this century, Roman Catholicism in North America was regarded as a mission project supported by gifts from outside the nation. But today, it is claimed by some, more money pours into Rome from the United States than from all other sources put together. History has a way of repeating itself, and

old controversies can come to life again at a mere pretext. That which has safeguarded the liberties of the people of the United States has been the determination to keep forever separate, church and state. And American Catholics generally have recognized the wisdom of this. As stated by Oscar Halecki, "The Vatican knows well that the separation of Church and State in the U.S. actually assists Roman Catholicism."—Oscar Halecki and James F. Murray, Jr., *Eugenio Pacelli: Pope of Peace*. Creative Age Press, Inc., New York, 1951. Quoted in article, "Pius XII and the U.S.A.," by Oscar Halecki, in the *Catholic Digest*, 15:7 (May, 1951).

In an address in July, 1953, at the New York University Center, John B. Sherrin, C.S.P., editor of the *Catholic World*, said: "It is not true, . . . that the Holy See condemned the proposition that 'the Church must be separated from the State and the State from the Church.'" What was condemned, he said, was a separation of Church and State as the ideal relationship, 'not the proposition that the Church may be separated from the State.'"
—*Religious News Service (Domestic)*, July 14, 1953.

This reasoning is clear in its implications, however. Events today are moving rapidly. There are feverish efforts to bring about a coalition between Roman Catholicism and the National Council of Churches. The *Christian Century*, a religious journal of the liberal school, recently said, "One day soon there'll be a headline announcing that the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S. has joined the National Council of Churches."—Feb. 23, 1972.

"An Image to the Beast"

An image is not the exact thing, but something so near to the original that it looks or acts the same. With the United States stretching her hands across the sea to clasp hands with the restored papacy, the world need scarcely be surprised to see the union completed. The wound of 1798 is rapidly being healed, and even the scar is disappearing. Her future role will be tremendous.

"That No Man Might Buy or Sell"

This graphic chapter closes with a picture of a world-wide boycott. In an endeavor to unify religious thought and establish peace among the nations, this two-horned beast power, America, will yet lead out in programs of religious confederation which will result in loss of liberty. Those only who identify themselves with the beast and receive his mark will be permitted to buy and sell. Contrary to all her history, America will join forces with the revived power of Rome and contrary to all expectations will find herself actually in the role of a religious oppressor.

One of the most significant and far-reaching events was Pope John's Vatican Council II of 1962-1965. He was fired with "a desire to see a new Pentecost." He therefore set out to adapt the church's whole life to the revolutionary changes in science, economics, politics—"to make it more Catholic and less Roman." He began by calling Protestants "separated brethren" rather than "heretics." The aim of this laudable attitude is Christian unity. This is exactly what prophecy indicates.

"Devils, Working Miracles," Revelation 16:14

The modern intrusion of demon power into Western culture is one of the most significant fulfillments of this amazing prophecy. At the very time that America was beginning to influence world thought, modern spiritism made its appearance. Since then, it has swept around the world and can count its adherents by millions. Many branches of occult science have arisen in recent decades. While these are not actually new, for they have always been a vital part in heathen religions, yet they are now invading the West with new powers of deception. Miracles are being wrought not by the power of God, but by demonism.

Spiritism, with its attendant table tipping and rappings, had its modern origin in 1848 at the home of the Fox sisters in Rochester, New York. It began in this crude form, but it has

since then developed into more or less a science. At least it is claiming the attention of many leading scientists. God declares it a deceiver by which earth's last generation will be led away from the saving truth of the gospel of Christ. Fire will even be brought down from heaven to compel the attention of the multitudes. Revelation 13:13. But the issue will reach a real climax when a coalition is made between spiritism, Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism. This will culminate in the enforced worship of the beast and the reception of his mark. (The identity of this mark will be revealed in our next chapter.) These events will lead to the setting up of the image of the beast. And occultism in various ways, but especially through spiritualism, will play a major role in the final worldwide deception. This movement will draw together every form of religious culture with the avowed objective of building a world government headed by a world church. And persecution has historically followed on the heels of a uniting of church and state.

The Torch of Liberty

A family had been seeing the sights of New York for the first time. They had visited many places, among them the famous Statue of Liberty. After an exciting day, the little girl found it difficult to get to sleep. "Why don't you go to sleep, honey?" asked the father. She replied: "Daddy, I'm thinking about that lady with the lamp out there in the dark. She's all alone. Don't you think we should be helping Miss Liberty to hold up the lamp?" To help hold up the torch of liberty is the duty, not only of one family, but of every true Christian throughout America and the world.

God's Final Appeal to Mankind

THE significance of this chapter will be missed unless we view it in relation to chapters 12 and 13. John is watching the preparations for the final battle between two great opposing powers. The enemy of all righteousness is marshaling his strength against God's loyal remnant. Even America, the champion of freedom, will forget her history. With such a combination of evil, and all the world acclaiming the greatness of the beast and his image, how can true Christianity possibly survive?

The Victorious Company With the Lamb on Mount Zion

With dramatic instinct, the prophet quickly shifts the scene. We gaze not upon oppressing powers of earth, but on the victorious company standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion. What a contrast! The "Father's name," not the "mark . . . of the beast" is "written in their foreheads." They are a special group, the same group we noticed in chapter 7. In the setting of that prophecy this group was still on the earth surrounded by their enemies, but ready to be sealed with the seal of the living God. They are gathered from all nations. In chapter 14, the same company is seen with Christ. (For the significance of the number 144,000, see page 80.)

They Sing "a New Song"

As John watches he is enthralled by the sound of singing. It is like the rolling of many waters, or the voice of a great

multitude. Forty-six times in the Apocalypse voices are heard, and they are almost all voices of victory. This is not only a song of victory: it is a song of experience. Only those who have passed through the time of trouble, who have stood firmly for God's truth when all the world wondered after the beast, and who have witnessed the awful effects of the seven last plagues, will be able to join in this particular song. It is a *new* song, for it records a *new* experience. It is majestic and sublime, yet sweet and tender—the most lovely song in heaven or earth, like "harpers harping with their harps." Those only who have experienced full salvation from sin can learn it.

They Are "Not Defiled With Women," Verse 4

Those constituting this special company are undefiled in life and doctrine. A woman in prophecy denotes a church. In Revelation 17:5 we have the picture of an impure woman with her daughters, all of whom have partaken of the same unholy nature. This woman is called "Mystery, Babylon the Great." This is the apostate church which reigns over the kings of the earth. Revelation 17:18. While this has had its application through the centuries, yet its special fulfillment is just before Christ returns. But the 144,000 are not defiled with these women, or these apostate churches. They have a pure faith not defiled by false teachings; it is "the faith of Jesus."

"They Are Virgins"

The church that will be waiting for the Master's return is described in the parable of the ten virgins. Matthew 25:1-13. They are virgins because they have a pure faith. They keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:12. The "lamps" in the hands of the waiting virgins are a symbol of the word of God, which David declared was a lamp unto his feet. Psalm 119:105. It is not sufficient to have the lamp; we also need the oil—a deep Christian experience which comes through the indwelling Spirit of God.

The First Fruits to God and the Lamb, Verse 4

The expression "first fruits" refers to quality. Of all those redeemed from the earth, these are the first in quality. They have been *purchased away from men*. They have been separated from the sinful habits and conversation of the world. 1 Corinthians 6:20. They have not been deluded by the deceptions of the devil. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11.

In his letter to the church, John said that when Jesus shall appear we shall be like Him. 1 John 3:3. To be like the Master is the highest spiritual attainment.

Those who come from the grave at the second coming of Christ will be raised in a state of perfection by the power of creation. Those who will be living to witness His coming will have grown into perfection by the grace and power of the indwelling Spirit. This, too, is a manifestation of creative power.

"They Are Without Fault," Verse 5

"In their mouth was found no guile." Here is God's description of the victorious remnant awaiting their Master's return. James says, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." James 3:2. Zephaniah, describing the remnant church, says that they "shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth." Zephaniah 3:13.

"These . . . Follow the Lamb," Verse 4

The highest honor God can ever grant is reserved for this special company. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Accompanying their loved Commander throughout the vast universe, they become a special trophy of grace. Having lived during earth's most tragic hour when the deceptions of the devil have been the greatest, they have nevertheless been victorious. What a wonderful reward for their faith! What is the secret of their victory when everything is set against them? The answer is found in the three angels' messages brought to view in the next few verses.

The Angel "Having the Everlasting Gospel," Verse 6

Symbolizing a message or a messenger, this first angel represents a world-wide message; not some new message, but rather the message of the old, the everlasting gospel. God has always had but one gospel, sometimes called "the gospel of God," "the gospel of grace," "the gospel of Jesus Christ," "the gospel of the kingdom," etc. These different expressions merely emphasize different phases of the same glorious gospel or good news. It was proclaimed to Adam before he was driven from Eden. Noah, too, was "a preacher of righteousness." 2 Peter 2:5. He proclaimed salvation from sin because he "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Genesis 6:8. Faithful Abraham taught the same glorious gospel (Galatians 3:8), and Moses esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Hebrews 11:26). These all looked *forward* to the Redeemer, whereas we who are living on this side of the cross of Christ look *backward*. But men of every age are saved from sin by the same grace and the same Saviour. Paul speaks of God's "eternal purpose," but it was made known to men in the setting they could understand. In each particular age some special emphasis has been given to some particular phase of the gospel. In this last generation the great burden of the gospel is to herald the imminent return of our Lord and to prepare a people to meet Him. It is therefore in the setting of the judgment hour that the everlasting gospel is being proclaimed today. It comes with special warning to all them that "dwell" or "sit" on the earth, those who are at ease and settled.

The First Angel's Message—God's Judgment Hour Is Come

From his vantage point in the heavenly sanctuary John envisions dramatic happenings. Three angels are sent forth from God's headquarters as recruiting officers. They are bidden to hurry with special messages to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. They are to enlist recruits for God. Not all in the world have made their decision to be wholly for God or for Satan.

"Multitudes in the valley of decision," is another prophet's description. Joel 3:14. In the very hour of God's judgment millions hear the messages, and a great multitude rally to the call of "the Captain of their salvation" and join the ranks of God.

Judgment is intrinsic to the gospel of Christ, for only in the judgment will the righteousness of God be revealed and His character vindicated. And in that count the names of overcomers only are retained in the Lamb's book of life. Revelation 3:5; Daniel 12:1. When Paul preached, he looked *forward* to the judgment. "He reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment *to come*." Acts 24:25. But the last message of mercy that goes to the world declares that the hour of God's judgment *is* come. This is the truth for this generation. The hour of God's judgment has already struck. See chapter 10, and note diagram.

This judgment announcement is a call to worship the Creator. At the time the beast and his image are claiming the worship of the nations, God calls men to worship Him who made heaven and earth. Like the Romans to whom Paul wrote, men today are worshiping "the creature more than the Creator." Education and human philosophy have robbed men of the concept of a personal God. The Creator has been lost in His creation. To worship the Creator fully, we must also recognize the sign of His creative power, and that sign is the Sabbath. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, . . . and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:11.

"God's *blessing* and *sanctifying* the day, meant that He separated it from a common to a religious use, to be a perpetual memorial or sign that all who thus observe it would show themselves to be the worshipers of that God who made the world in six days and rested on the seventh."—*Binney's Theological Compend*, pages 169, 170.

"The importance of the Sabbath as a memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God—because He is the Creator, and we are His creatures.

'The Sabbath, therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship; for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten.'—J. N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, chapter 27. It was to keep this truth ever before the minds of men, that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden; and so long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial. Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man's thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolator, an atheist or an infidel. The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God, 'Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.' It follows that the message which commands men to worship God and keep His commandments, will especially call upon them to keep the fourth commandment."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 437, 438.

The Second Angel's Message—"Babylon Is Fallen," Verse 8

This is the first time the word Babylon occurs in the book of Revelation, and as we have already noticed, it is used just six times. We have observed that number 6 is prominent in the mystery worship of ancient Babylon. This ancient city had its origin when men willfully and knowingly turned from the grace of God and sought salvation by their own works. Nimrod's building of the city of Babylon culminated in the apostasy of the Tower of Babel. See page 23.

"Let us make us a name," they said. Genesis 11:4. Reference has already been made in chapter 3 to this deliberate and organized apostasy. This whole project was in defiance of God's promise that He would never again destroy the world by a flood. The

name by which they would have desired to be remembered was Bab-ril, meaning "gate of God;" but God sent confusion to them, and they never finished their project. God called the place "Babel" or "Babylon," which means confusion. Their tower, which was to be a monument to their pride, became a memorial to their folly.

From that day to this, Babylon has symbolized apostasy, arrogance, confusion, and a man-made salvation. Two ancient cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, are set in contrast in the Scriptures—Salem, meaning "peace," and Babel, meaning "confusion." One city (Jerusalem) became the center of God's earthly kingdom; the other (Babylon) became the center of Satan's earthly kingdom. In the New Testament, and especially in the Revelation, these cities represent two spiritual kingdoms.

Part of God's threefold message today is, "Babylon is fallen, . . . because she made all nations drink." Many professing Christians, like the ancient Babel builders, have turned from the everlasting gospel to follow their own devisings, with the theory of evolution replacing the Bible account of creation. It is being heralded today, not only in the halls of learning, but even from the pulpits. The effect of this modern evolutionary theory upon Christian belief is tremendous. Faith is being subtly undermined. Professor Randall of Columbia University stated:

"Today it seems that the great Hebrew-Christian moral tradition, the most ancient part of our heritage, is crumbling to pieces before our very eyes. . . . The man who trusts a physical science to describe the world finds no conceivable place into which to fit a deity."—*Current History*, June, 1929, pages 359-361.

James Gilkey states the truth about liberal Christianity thus: "Liberal Protestants have abandoned belief in the verbal infallibility of the Bible."—*A Faith to Affirm*, page 3.

To emphasize this, he quotes from recent speeches of certain modernist leaders, who seem to delight in expressing blatant unbelief of the cardinal doctrines of true Christianity. One preacher said:

"We believe that Jesus was a human being, . . . that He was

born in the normal way. . . . To us Jesus' death is, in essence, no different from the death of other heroes.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 9, 10.

Summing it up, he says:

“Today the ancient belief that Jesus will reappear in the sky, inaugurate a dramatic world judgment, . . . has dwindled from a universally accepted and enormously influential Christian conviction to the esoteric doctrine of a minority. Once a modern man accepts what historians tell him about the age of the universe and once he accepts what scientists tell him about the nature of the evolutionary process, he cannot believe that there will ever be any such spectacular wind-up of the world's affairs as the one which the early Christians believed would presently take place.”

—*Ibid.*, p. 24.

The nations and even many churches are drunk with the intoxicating wine of Babylon. As the ancient Babylonians, “mad upon their idols” (Jeremiah 50:38; 51:7), defied God and were overthrown (Daniel 5), so also will modern Babylon meet her doom. Ancient Babylon could have been healed, but she refused the truth of God. Jeremiah 51:9. Like that ancient city, modern Babylon is also rejecting the divine counsel. Having despised the word of God, she has actually “become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit.” Revelation 18:2.

Every unholy doctrine found in ancient Babylon—spiritism, sun worship, astrology, etc., with all their accompanying evils—can be found in modern Babylon. Because she is doomed, God is calling His people to separate from her. “Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins.” Revelation 18:4. “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; . . . and I will receive you.” 2 Corinthians 6:17.

The Third Angel's Message—A Warning Against False Worship

“If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture.”

Revelation 14:9, 10. No other message in all the Bible is as solemn as this, and it comes with particular meaning in view of the world-wide apostasy and boycott prophesied in chapter 13:16, 17, when universal allegiance to the apostate power will be enforced.

The Mark of the Beast

Whatever the mark of the beast is, it must be something clear and definite. God's unmixed wrath would not be reserved as a punishment for an unknown offense. Furthermore, the mark of the beast must be in contradistinction to the "seal" or mark of God. His seal, the sign of His creative power, as we have already noted, is God's rest day, or the true Sabbath. It follows that the seal or mark of this universal apostasy would be man's rest day, or the false day of worship.

When the church began to fall away from the apostolic faith, she gradually accepted pagan practices. False teachings took the place of truth. Among other things, she took a false day of worship. In the *Catholic World*, March, 1894, page 809, we read: "She took the pagan Sunday and made it the Christian Sunday. . . . And thus the pagan Sunday, dedicated to Balder, became the Christian Sunday, sacred to Jesus."

"The Christian Sabbath is therefore *to this day* the acknowledged offspring of the Catholic Church, as Spouse of the Holy Ghost, without a word of remonstrance from the Protestant world."—*The Catholic Mirror*, Sept. 23, 1893.

The late Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore says in his book, *The Faith of Our Fathers*: "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify."—Seventy-sixth ed., p. 86.

In a letter written October 8, 1901, Mr. C. F. Thomas, chancellor to Cardinal Gibbons, said that "it was the Catholic Church that authorized and sanctioned the change in the Lord's Day from the 7th day of the week with the 1st. She did it very early in her life."

In a Catholic work, *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine*, by Rev. Henry Tuberville, D.D., we read on page 58:

“Q. How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holydays?

“A. By the very act of changing the *sabbath* into *Sunday*.” Italics supplied.

From another Roman Catholic work we read:

“Q. *Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?*

“A. Had she not such power, she could not have . . . substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of *Saturday* the seventh day, a change for which there is *no Scriptural authority*.”—Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism*, page 174. Italics supplied.

“The earliest recognition of the observance of Sunday as a legal duty is a constitution of Constantine in A.D. 321, enacting that all courts of justice, inhabitants of towns, and workshops were to be at rest on Sunday (*venerabili die solis*), with an exception in favor of those engaged in agricultural labor.”—*The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., art. “Sunday.”

The mark of apostasy is thus clearly identified. The third angel warns against receiving this mark. But we do not know all that is to be known on this, nor can we know, until the unfolding of events. “The light we have received upon the third angel’s message is the true light. The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be. Not all in regard to this matter is yet understood, nor will it be understood until the unrolling of the scroll.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 17.

Before the Saviour appears in glory, every soul will have made his choice either to obey or to disobey the Lord. Great issues are before the church. International law will require universal allegiance to the false power of Rome. But those who heed such a law will dishonor God and break His command. It is then that men receive the mark of the beast. *Not until the issues are clearly set forth and all the world has heard God’s message will men re-*

ceive the mark of the beast. See *The Great Controversy*, page 449. God has His loyal witnesses in every church. They love His word and are living up to all the light they have received.

"No one has yet received the mark of the beast. . . . There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion. None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast."

—*Evangelism*, pages 234, 235.

Before our Lord returns, every individual will be compelled to make his choice. Those who refuse to obey the powers of earth and will at all costs keep the faith of Jesus, will be ostracized from society. Even as Daniel refused to compromise his faith and accepted the death decree rather than deny his God, and was miraculously delivered from the power of the lions, so it will be in this last crisis with those who stand true to heaven's commands. It is then that those who willfully and knowingly choose to obey this apostate power and receive the mark of the beast "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." Revelation 14:10.

"The Patience of the Saints," Verse 12

This word "patience" is also translated "steadfastness." It will be a patient and steadfast people that will be waiting for the coming of the Lord. See Hebrews 10:36, 37. They will also be an obedient people "who carefully keep His commandments and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12, Weymouth.

The church of the Reformation was commended for her *patience* and *faith*. Revelation 13:10. But this last church is commended for her *obedience* as well as her *patience* and *faith*. And her *obedience* will be particularly conspicuous. In worshiping the Creator, she keeps holy the Sabbath day, recognizing it as

a sign of God's sanctifying power. Ezekiel 20:12. Those who accept this final message of God to the world are themselves a sign of God's power to convert and re-create. Isaiah 8:18; Zechariah 3:8, margin.

God's remnant people are known in different countries by various names descriptive of their Christian experience. In Fiji the natives early called them "the clean church;" in Liberia, "the people of the washing of hearts;" in other places, "the walking Ten Commandments;" "the second advent people;" and "the people of love." Jesus said: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35. And Paul says that Christ "loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:25-27.

The Triumph of the Church, and the Seven Last Plagues

AS THE prophet John watched the unfolding panorama, he saw that prior to the return of Jesus the whole world will have heard God's final warning and appeal. He saw the everlasting gospel going "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Revelation 14:6. Being proclaimed in the setting of the three angels' messages, it becomes a power in the earth.

Revelation 15 and 16

A Great World-Wide Delusion. The greatest deception of all time is yet to be staged, and this will take place just before the appearing of our Lord, when "Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" deceives the whole world. Those who fail to heed God's message will be ensnared by this delusion, and they will actually believe a lie, or "the lie" (R.V.). 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11.

Jesus spoke of this delusion, saying that the whole world would be caught in the snare. Luke 21:35. The deception would be so great that if possible even the very elect would be deceived. Matthew 24:24. But they will not be deceived. Because they love the truth and have fortified themselves by the word of God, they will be able to withstand the delusion. Ephesians 6:10-17. The devil is even now spreading a veil over the nations. Isaiah 25:7. He is

putting “a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err” (Isaiah 30:28), and men are making lies their refuge (Isaiah 28:17).

“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” 2 Corinthians 11:14. It is the spirits of devils that go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world “to fasten them in deception and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects alike will be deceived.

“As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour’s advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air, ‘Christ has come! Christ has come!’ The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands, and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people. . . . This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. . . .

“But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God’s unmixed wrath shall be poured out. . . .

“Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures, and who have received the love of the truth, will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive.”—The Great Controversy, pages 624, 625. Italics supplied.

These victorious ones will, by the grace of Christ, be keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:12.

The Wine of God's Wrath

God's last message climaxes with the tremendous announcement that those who refuse to accept salvation will ultimately drink of the wine of the wrath of God, unmixed with mercy. Revelation 14:9-11. The word "torment" (verse 11) is an unfortunate translation and is not sustained by the original. The Greek word *basanizmos* properly means to examine by the use of the *basanos*, a species of stone from Lydia which was applied to metals, as it was thought to indicate any alloy which might be mixed with them. Gold left a yellow streak on this touchstone. (See Liddell and Scott's or any other standard lexicon.) Today we test gold by acid or fire. In Matthew 14:24 the word *basanidzomenon*, from the verb *basanidzo*, which comes from the above noun *basanos*, is translated "tossed," where it describes the ship tossed or "tested" by the waves. In Revelation 14:11 the word "torment" really means to "test" or "prove by trial."

One important thought, often overlooked by certain interpreters, is the fact that this testing takes place, not in some faraway place of torture, some purgatory, but "in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." Verse 10. Paul says, "The fire shall try [prove] every man's work of what sort it is." 1 Corinthians 3:13. And all, righteous and wicked alike, will go through the same test, and before the whole un fallen universe will be revealed those who are really God's people and those who are not. Isaiah asks: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Isaiah 33:14. Then is revealed the fact that *some will stand the test*, but those only who are righteous and upright before God. Verse 15.

Just as the three Hebrew worthies were preserved in the burning fiery furnace (Daniel 3), so will the righteous stand at

last in the presence of a holy God, whom the Scripture speaks of as "a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29).

The Return of Christ—the Climax of the Ages

A most beautiful description of our Saviour's second advent is found in Revelation 14:14. Surrounded by a cloud of angels, His brow adorned with a golden crown, and carrying a sharp sickle, He comes to reap the harvest of the earth. Jesus, in His parable of the wheat and tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43), emphasized this reaping and declared that the good seed represented the children of the kingdom.

Another harvest is brought to view in Revelation 14:18: the harvest of the ripened grapes. Two vines have been growing in the earth, one of heavenly origin, the other of the earth, earthy. Jesus said, "I am the True Vine" and "ye are the branches." John 15:1, 5. The Scriptures speak of evil being destroyed "root" and "branch." Malachi 4:1. The devil and his followers comprise this other vine. When at last the angels of God gather the ripe clusters of the grapes of wrath and cast them into the wine press of God's judgment, terrible indeed will be the vintage. See Psalm 75:8.

"A Sea of Glass Mingled With Fire"

In contrast with the scene of destruction in the closing verses of chapter 14, the next scene that opens to the view of this prophet is one of victory. Those who have witnessed the brilliant spectacle of a tropic sunset at sea have caught a faint idea of the glory the prophet here attempts to describe. As the great sun sinks like a ball of blazing fire, the ocean itself seems to break forth into flames of glory; the waves, touched with crimson, transform the whole scene into a mingling of flood and flame. So was the scene that opened to the Patmos prophet. The scene of glory became more real as he thought of it in retrospect. Picture him returning to his place of rest after a convict's hard day. Suddenly he catches a glimpse of sunset glory over the

Mediterranean. It becomes to him a beautiful symbol of that great day of realities when the toil of earth is ended and all disappointments are past and the saints stand at last in the presence of their God. Then, lifting his eyes from the scenes on earth to a scene more wondrous, his thoughts make more glorious the "sea of glass mingled with fire" on which the redeemed stand at last victorious. Then he catches the sound of singing. It is the song of victory. The saints are home at last. Insignificant indeed are the trials of earth in comparison with that scene of splendor!

"The Song of Moses . . . and . . . the Lamb"

What marvelous contrasts are found in this book! Apocalyptic writings follow this pattern. Scenes of victory and glory are set over in vivid contrast with the scenes of defeat and desolation. John caught the echo of this mighty anthem as it bursts from the lips of those who, by grace, have conquered the power of the enemy. They sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. It is the song of Moses because it voices the praise of those who, like ancient Israel at the Red Sea, have been miraculously delivered from impending destruction. But it is also the song of the Lamb because it speaks of the triumph of God's people over death and the grave. It will be a song of experience, and only those who have passed through the experience will be able to join in that paean of praise. The angels will not be able to sing that song, but poor lost sinners redeemed by grace will tell the story in an anthem never heard before.

But when I sing redemption's story,
They will fold their wings,
For angels never felt the joys
That our salvation brings.

—Johnson Oatman, Jr.

Wonderful is the music we sometimes hear on earth, but nothing can compare with this tremendous chorus as this redeemed company sweep their harps of gold, and, pitching their

celestial song a note higher, change from the minor key of sorrow into the major key of everlasting joy. And the wonder of it all is, we, too, can be among them. "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?" Revelation 15:4.

The Seven Angels With the Vials

The closing verses of chapter 15 unfold one of the most arresting scenes in the whole book. When the seven angels go forth with the vials of wrath, the Scripture says that until their work was finished, "no man was able to enter into the temple." Verse 8. Before the judgments of God break upon a guilty world, the gospel message of invitation will have been heard by every soul on earth; man's opportunity for salvation will have passed, and the door of mercy will have been closed forever.

Some commentators try to make this prophecy of the plagues run parallel with the seals and the trumpets, etc., That really cannot be, for the plagues are poured out upon those who have received the mark of the beast, and that mark will not be received until just before Christ appears in glory. These judgments fall *after* Christ has finished His ministry on behalf of sinners. Furthermore, the scripture declares that these plagues shall "come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine." Revelation 18:8. We have already mentioned that a day in prophecy is a year, and it is evident that this could not possibly be a literal day of twenty-four hours, for no famine could result in so short a time, no matter how bad the conditions. Moreover, the scripture indicates that some of the same men who suffer under the first plague also suffer under the other plagues. It is therefore evident that these judgments fall on the same generation, and will last through a prophetic day or a literal year.

The Description of the Plagues

A number of the prophets have described the effect of these judgments, Isaiah and Joel particularly. Joel 1:17-20 says: "The seed is rotten under their clods; . . . the corn is withered. . . .

The flocks of sheep are made desolate. . . . The rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures." While this doubtless had a spiritual application in the days in which Joel was writing, yet it was "the day of the Lord" that he was describing. Verse 15; 2:1.

The *first plague* is a grievous sore which falls upon those who have the mark of the beast. Revelation 16:2. Before the angel pours out his vial, the whole human race will have divided itself into two classes: those who are sealed with the seal of the living God, and those who have the mark of the beast. To the one class who are under the protecting wings of the Almighty, the promise is: "Thou shalt not be afraid for the . . . pestilence that walketh in darkness. . . . A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. . . . Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." Psalm 91:5-10.

The *second and third plagues* fall upon the waters, turning the sea and the water supplies of the nations into a putrefaction resembling the blood of a dead man. When the ocean becomes a place of death, the inhabitants of every country in the world will be affected. But God's people need not fear. Some of the most beautiful promises in God's word reveal His plan to protect His chosen ones during those awful days. Here is one: "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." Isaiah 41:17, 18. And again: "He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Isaiah 33:16.

The *fourth plague* is poured out on the sun, which is given power to scorch men with heat. Their only response is to blaspheme the Almighty. They cannot repent because repentance is the work of the Holy Spirit. But before the plagues fall, the Spirit of God will have been withdrawn from this earth.

The *fifth* vial is poured out on the seat, or throne, of the beast, plunging the kingdom of error into dense darkness. There is a similarity between these plagues and the plagues that fell on Egypt. Those, however, were judgments on one small country, while these seven last plagues affect the whole world and men of every nation. When Egypt was dark, there was light in the dwellings of Israel.

When the *sixth* angel poured out his vial, the prophet John says he beheld "three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet." Revelation 16:13. In ancient Egypt the frog was an object of veneration, and three black frogs were a symbol of their pagan and spirit deities. The introduction of this symbol of the frog into this prophecy is arresting. As is well known, this little creature hibernates; that is, it disappears for a time, only to return and disturb us with its croaking. So paganism and spiritism disappeared, as it were, for a time, at least in the Western world, but these are reappearing under many disguises. Pagan thinking has entered our educational classrooms. It has even claimed many pulpits. In the final scenes of earth's history, paganism and spiritism under the cloak of religion are to exercise tremendous influence.

These unclean spirits come from the *mouths* of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The power of lying propaganda was amply demonstrated during World War II. But it will reach its maximum under the sixth plague, when the spirits of demons will gather the nations of the whole world for "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Verse 14. Protestant churches whose founders went to the stake for their faith "will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.

"As spiritualism more closely imitates the nominal Christianity

of the day, it has greater power to deceive and ensnare. Satan himself is converted, after the modern order of things. He will appear in the character of an angel of light. Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. And as the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 588.

Through the combined influence of spiritism, Roman Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism, the world will be led, not to peace, but to war. And that war will be against God Himself. Revelation 16:16 says that the nations are gathered together “into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

Through the centuries many ideas have been expressed concerning Armageddon. Unfulfilled prophecy has always been a fertile field for human speculation. Palestine may well be the storm center of a world-wide conflict, but the battle of the day of God Almighty will not be confined to any one land in particular. The issues are much larger than many have imagined. It is not *geographical location* that the Lord is emphasizing as much as *revelation of issues* at stake. The Holy Land will be involved, because *every* land of earth will be a scene for this last great struggle. “The kings of the earth and of the whole world” (verse 14) will be involved. It would be physically impossible to gather all the armies of the world on one battlefield. The word “battle” in this verse is translated from the Greek word *polemos*, which is often translated “war” rather than “battle.” It may be either a single encounter or a series. In this death struggle between the combined powers of darkness and hate and the legions of light and love, the whole world will be the battlefield, and so terrible will be the slaughter of that day that “they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried.” Jeremiah 25:33.

“Soon, very soon, will be fought the last great battle between good and evil. The earth is to be the battlefield—the scene of the final contest and the final victory. Here, where for so long Satan

has led men against God, rebellion is to be forever suppressed."—Ellen G. White, in *The Review and Herald*, May 13, 1902, p. 9.

"The battle of Armageddon is soon to be fought. He on whose vesture is written the name, King of kings, and Lord of lords, is soon to lead forth the armies of heaven."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 406. This battle is between heaven and earth, Christ and Satan.

Describing the tremendous scope of this conflict, John says: "These shall make *war* with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings." Revelation 17:14. Again, he says: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him, . . . and against His army." Revelation 19:19. "*Make war*" occurs sixteen times in the New Testament; nine times in the Revelation.

Who but the most spiritually blind could fail to see the shaping of events that will lead to the final battle which ends the misrule of men and ushers in the long-expected kingdom of peace? "The real issue at stake in Armageddon will not be so much material and international as spiritual. It will actually be a struggle between the devil and wicked nations on the one side and God and His people on the other."—W. H. Branson, *Drama of the Ages*, page 533. So tremendous will be that conflagration that were it not for the fact that God sends down His mighty ones to protect His people, they would be wiped off the earth. "In the midst of the time of trouble that is coming, . . . God's chosen people will stand unmoved. Satan and his host cannot destroy them, for angels that excel in strength will protect them."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 17. Describing this coming conflict, the prophet Joel says, "Thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord." Joel 3:11. The battle of the great day of God Almighty will cease, not by the conquest of one nation over another nation or one group of nations over another group of nations, but by the sudden appearing of Jesus Christ as He comes in power and great glory. The wicked will then flee in terror.

When the *seventh* angel pours out his vial, a voice from heaven is heard to say, "It is done." Then follow lightnings, thunderings, and a great earthquake, the like of which has never been since men were upon the earth. Revelation 16:17, 18.

Great Babylon, the symbol of an apostate world, now receives her full judgment. Islands flee away, and the mountains are not found; hailstones weighing fifty to one hundred pounds fall from heaven. Some suggest that the bombings we have known in recent years are fulfillment of this prophecy. But this plague comes from God and not from men. The Lord said to Job: "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?" Job 38:22, 23. Isaiah spoke of "the overflowing scourge" that will pass through the land and destroy those who have made lies their refuge. Isaiah 28:15, 18. Daniel speaks of it as the "time of trouble, such as never was." Daniel 12:1. Then he adds, "Thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book"—the book of life.

Before the coming of this day of destruction, God sends an invitation to all to gather together and seek Him. Those who heed His message will be sheltered from these plagues (see Zephaniah 2:1-3), for "the Lord will be the hope of His people" (Joel 3:16). Psalms 46 and 91 are both moving descriptions of this time of earthly calamity. But God's people will be protected "under His wings." In the midst of all the conflagration, the resurrection will take place. "Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints."—*The Great Controversy*, page 644. This will be the overwhelming evidence of God's supreme power over His enemies. When the sleeping saints are raised to immortality and the living saints are caught up to meet Him in the air, the wicked who have refused salvation will flee in terror, only to be destroyed "with the brightness of His coming." 2 Thessalonians 2:8. What a scene of victory and tragedy—victory for the saints; tragedy for the sinners! May God help us to be ready.

The Judgment of the Scarlet Woman

REVELATION 17 is to many an enigma. But like a combination lock, if we know the right combination it is no longer an enigma. Having beheld the outpouring of God's judgments in the seven last plagues, and the climax of history in the tremendous convulsions of nature, when mountains and islands disappear and the works of man are destroyed, the Patmos prophet now sees a more intimate view of the power that intoxicates the nations and defies the God of heaven.

Revelation 17 and 18

With dramatic instinct the prophet paints his word pictures. A woman sits upon a scarlet beast. "On her forehead was a name with a secret meaning" (NEB). She is decked in royal purple and shameless scarlet; her title: "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth."

The Identity of the Woman

This language is impressive; yet we must ask, Who is this woman called "Mystery, Babylon the Great"? There can be no doubt as to her identity. As we have already noticed, a woman in prophecy represents a church. The woman in chapter 12 is a beautiful symbol of the true church of Jesus Christ, but this woman in chapter 17, corrupt in character and deceptive in

nature, contrasts in every way with that virtuous woman. God likened His people to "a comely and delicate woman," or to a woman "dwelling at home" (margin). Jeremiah 6:2. But this woman is not dwelling at home. Instead she is courting kings and living in illicit relationship with the world. She is not attired in "fine linen," which "is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8); but is lavishly adorned in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and costly gems. John saw her also drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus. He was viewing this apostate church subsequent to the centuries of persecution. She was holding in her hand a cup "full of abominations." In Scripture the words "abomination," "lie," "graven image," and false "god" are all used synonymously. See 1 Kings 11:7, 2, 3; Isaiah 44:15, 19, 20. This is not the cup of salvation, for which David of old prayed (Psalm 116:13), but is full of false gods and lying abominations, such as the counterfeit doctrines of false priesthood which claims power to forgive sins and decide cases. St. Alphonsus de Liguori, writing under the imprimatur of papal authorities, says: "The priest has the power of the keys, or the power of delivering sinners from hell, of making them worthy of paradise, and of changing them from the slaves of Satan into the children of God. And God himself is obligated to abide by the judgment of his priests, and either not to pardon or to pardon."—*Dignity and Duties of the Priest*, edited by Rev. Eugene Grimm, 1927, p. 27.

"When St. Michael comes to a dying Christian who invokes his aid, the holy archangel can chase away the devils, but he cannot free his clients from their chains till a priest comes to absolve him."—*Ibid.*, p. 31.

Incredible blasphemy! But millions of sincere souls believe it and order their lives accordingly.

And the woman had "a golden cup in her hand." One of the most vital doctrines in this apostate church is the daily sacrifice of the mass. The wafer in the golden monstrance they claim is the living Christ. Sacred as is the doctrine of transubstantiation to

the devout Roman Catholic, it surely is idolatry to say that this piece of bread is actually the Creator of heaven and earth. Since the infliction of her “deadly wound” in 1798, the papacy has fought her way back to prestige and power. Perhaps nothing has contributed more to her recovery than have the International Eucharistic Congresses held throughout the world, in which the elevation of the “Eucharistic Christ” is the dominant point of the whole proceedings.

The Church Falls From Her Pure Faith

In the study of the seven churches and the seven seals we saw how corruption came into the church in the early centuries. Her purity was lost as soon as she courted the favor of the world. Then little by little she became corrupt. Even before the days of Dante in the twelfth century, literary thinkers and true theologians were consistently applying this prophecy to the Church of Rome. In his *Divine Comedy*, Dante made a forthright indictment of the established church of his day. Ignaz Döllinger declares of this masterpiece, that it was “the boldest, most unsparing, most incisive, denunciatory song that has ever been composed.”

Your avarice

O'ercasts the world with mourning, underfoot
 Treading the good, and raising bad men up.
 Of shepherds like to you, the Evangelist
 Was ware, when her, who sits upon the waves,
 With kings in filthy whoredom he beheld,
 She who with seven heads towered at her birth,
 And from ten horns her proof of glory drew. . . .
 Of gold and silver ye have made your god. . . .
 Ah, Constantine! to how much ill gave birth,
 Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower,
 Which the first wealthy Father gained from thee.

—Canto 19

Space and time forbid quoting from many others who wrote during those centuries. The application of this prophecy to the

Roman Church is practically universal. Of course, those earlier writers, like Dante, were actually members of the established Church of Rome; and this was hundreds of years before the rise of Protestantism.

The beast on which the woman sits, like the other beasts of prophecy, represents the civil or political power. Upheld by the power of the state, this woman, symbol of the apostate church, is seen guiding and controlling the nations. She does it for her own ends. Students of history recognize in this the pattern of Roman Catholicism during the past fifteen hundred years, at least whenever and wherever she has been strong enough to gain that control.

On the occasion of the jubilee of Pope Leo XII a medal was struck bearing on the one side his image, and on the other side a symbol of the Church of Rome. On this medal we see a woman holding in her left hand a cross and in her right hand a cup, with this legend around her, *Sedet super universum* ("The whole world is her seat"). This unwitting fulfillment of prophecy is only one of many that could be mentioned. The apostasy and the antichrist, which the apostle Paul foretold would arise and be found sitting in the temple of God, claiming to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4), is not something to arise in the future—it is in the world today.

Significance of Her Name

She had a name written, "Mystery, Babylon the Great." When the mystery cults of ancient Babylon came into the church, the foundations for the mystery of iniquity were laid. As emphasized on page 24, the mysteries took the form of religion only a short time after the Flood and were a definite attempt to destroy the knowledge of the true God from the minds of men.

Nimrod, "a mighty hunter before the Lord" (Genesis 10:9), began the kingdom of Babylon, and legend has it that upon his death his depraved and licentious queen, eager to hold her influence over the people, instituted certain rites in which she was worshiped as Rhea, the great "Mother" of the gods. This Chal-

dean queen is a fitting prototype of this woman in the Apocalypse on whose forehead is the name "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." When John saw her she was drunk. But her debauchery was at an end; she was awaiting her judgment. He was astonished, and well he might be. The angel, unfolding to him the mystery of it all, said: "The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Revelation 17:18.

Nine times in the Revelation we find the expression, the "great city," as applied to this apostate system. The woman represents ecclesiastical power; the beast, political power. In this symbol we find the complete union of the church and state, and all "whose names were not written in the book of life" are amazed as they witness the rise and influence of this tremendous religio-political power described as "the beast that *was*, and *is not*, and *yet is*." Verse 8.

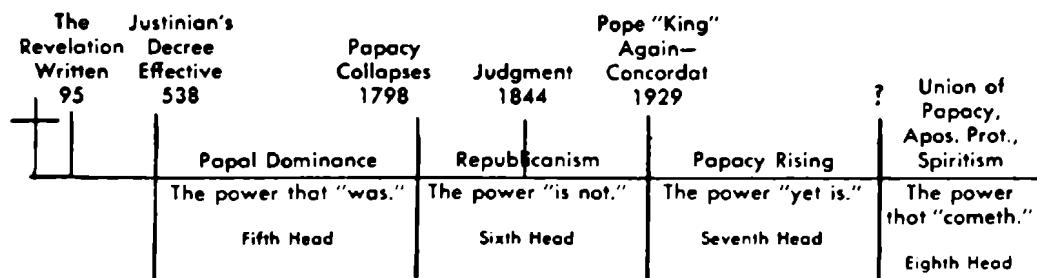
The Power That Fell and Rose Again

Having received state recognition at the time when Justinian's decree became effective in A.D. 538, this apostate power in Rome began her dominance, which was to last 1260 years. During those centuries she practically controlled the political scene in Europe, crowning the kings and excommunicating even *royal* "heretics." But she received a "deadly wound" in the Napoleonic Wars, and the pope himself was taken prisoner. This occurred August 9, 1798. Some Bible interpreters see in this event a particular fulfillment of this rather difficult portion of the prophecy. The power that "*was*," they say, ceased to control, and another period of her existence unfolded, comparatively described as the "*is not*" period. She had gone into captivity (Revelation 13:10), and many writers of this time fully believed that the papacy could never rise again. A number of books were published by secular historians emphasizing that belief. But John was shown that she would ascend again and become a world power.

It is never wise to be dogmatic when studying unfulfilled

prophecies. A Biblical principle is clear; Jesus said, "I have told you *before* it come to pass, that, *when it is come to pass*, ye might believe." John 14:29. The unfolding of events are even now clarifying many of these difficult passages.

During the last century the Church of Rome has been regaining her political influence until today she is strong once more. In 1854 the papal dogma of the Immaculate Conception was pronounced. In 1870 she enunciated the dogma of papal infallibility. In 1929 the pope received recognition as a sovereign ruler. In 1951 she set forth the dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. But greater things are yet to come, for "all the world" will wonder "after the beast." Revelation 13:3. Thus some Bible interpreters hold that it could be said that the beast, or the political power of the papacy, *was* from 538 to 1798; that it *was not* from 1798 to 1929; and that now it *yet is*. Her power will be even greater before our Saviour returns. Her pride will mount up to heaven.



As we have noticed in earlier chapters, when John received this vision, he was witnessing scenes in heaven when "the judgment was set and the books were opened." Thus, in vision, he was brought forward to our own time, and as the scroll of prophecy and history unrolled before him, he was instructed to write what he was seeing. While these messages have been studied with profit and inspiration throughout the centuries, they have their special application to earth's last generation. Through the study of His word, the Lord by His Spirit is preparing a people to stand through the final days of deception and be ready for the appearing

of our Lord. The prophet was, therefore, witnessing events of our own day.

The Beast With the Seven Heads

At the time this prophecy had its special application, five of the seven heads of the beast were "fallen." While it might not be wise to be dogmatic on the specific identity of these heads, yet it is significant that there are seven different and distinct powers introduced into Scripture by prophetic symbols. These are clearly indicated: Babylon (the lion, Daniel 7:4); Persia (the bear, verse 5); Grecia (the leopard, verse 6); pagan Rome (the ten-horned beast, verse 7); papal or ecclesiastical Rome (the seven-headed beast of Revelation 13; also the horn that spoke great words and blasphemies, Daniel 7:8; Revelation 13:2, 5); republicanism or democracy (the two-horned beast, verse 11); and the last great confederacy of evil (the scarlet beast, Revelation 17:3). The "great red dragon" of Revelation 12 cannot be a symbol of any one specific power, for while it represents pagan Rome's attack on the infant Jesus, later verses in the chapter show its warfare against God's last people. In reality it covers the whole period occupied by all these beast powers, for behind every political attack upon the people of God is the dragon, or the prince of evil. Even ancient Egypt was spoken of as the dragon. But the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation which unfold the reign of the great Gentile powers begin with the overthrow of the throne of Judah, which occurred under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, thus clearing the way for Gentile rule in the world. Jesus spoke of "the times of the Gentiles." Luke 21:24. The Gentile "times" are terminating now.

Through all the centuries the dragon, or the devil, was *waiting for the Child to be born*. He was therefore in existence *before* the Christian Era, but *he will make his most severe attack upon the remnant* or the last true church. This dragon power is a symbol of more than pagan Rome. As we have already emphasized in chapter 6, John was brought forward in vision and was witnessing

the events of the judgment. At the time that great scene opened in heaven (1844), the papacy was at a low ebb. Only a few years earlier she had received her deadly wound. At the time this prophecy of Revelation 17 has its special application, five of these great powers were fallen. These were Babylon, Persia, Greece, pagan Rome, and papal Rome—the deadly wound having been inflicted upon the papacy in 1798.

Now the prophet, watching, says that "one is;" that is, it was existent after 1798. The Revolutionary War in America overthrew "the divine right of kings," but it also overthrew the divine right of majorities. Prelates and popes have had no place in this growing nation. Democracy had its real opportunity in America, and, as we have already noticed, she arose at the time the papacy went down. Yet, startling as it may seem, this prophecy reveals that these great principles of liberty will ultimately be abandoned and that what was free Protestant America will actually become an ally of Rome and "make an image to the beast" which had the wound by a sword, and did live." Revelation 13:14. We would be blind if we failed to see that this very thing is taking place before our eyes today. The issue over the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican is only one of many evidences of the reviving power of Rome. James H. Ryan, Roman Catholic bishop of Omaha, defending Myron Taylor's appointment in 1940, wrote the following significant statement:

"With the election of Pius XII now behind us, and the memory of the almost universal approbation it received still fresh in the public mind, the place of the Papacy in world affairs seems to stand out in bolder relief than at almost any other epoch of its long existence. In few periods of history have the Popes exercised a larger influence—an interesting phenomenon when one recalls the low political ebb to which the Papacy had sunk at the middle of the last century, when, on all sides, reputable statesmen predicted its final and definitive annihilation within their own lifetime. But from Leo XIII to Pius XII much water has flowed under the bridge of international politics. Kingdoms that were

kingdoms in the days of Pius IX are no more; and empires that seemed eternal then have collapsed. . . .

"If history is any guide to the immediate future, state absolutism will not be any more successful in its efforts to humble Rome than was the dominant political ideology of the nineteenth century."—*New York Times*, May 12, 1940.

True, "much water *has* flowed under the bridge of international politics," and the foundation is being laid for the papacy's sudden rise to complete world-wide dominance. But the angel declared, "When he cometh, he must continue a short space." Revelation 17:10. Never again will this power dominate the centuries as she did before. Her power will be great, but for a very short time.

Horns Without Crowns

A significant difference between the leopard beast of Revelation 13 and the scarlet-colored beast of Revelation 17 should be emphasized. Each beast has ten horns, but while the horns on the leopard had ten crowns, no crowns are mentioned in the description of the scarlet beast. This last beast, as we have noticed, is descriptive of a period in history when crowns and monarchies are, to a large extent, out of fashion. The ten horns, the angel said, represent ten kings, yet these are uncrowned kings. They possess kingly power, however, and might better be called dictators.

During the first world war, four great empires passed away—the German, the Russian, the Austrian, and the Ottoman. These great powers collapsed, and they are no longer empires. Many other monarchies have also passed away in recent decades. It is said that between August and December of 1914, more than two hundred royalties and petty royalties had abdicated. With the disappearance of the kings, it became the fashion in government to establish republics, and these arose in many countries. However, it takes more than a mere change of governmental structure to bring liberty. History reveals that if power is placed in the

hands of men whose love of power is greater than their love of people, then "sovereign demos," or the rule of the people, can be as cruel a tyrant as any autocrat that ever occupied a throne.

"These Have One Mind"

Now the prophet learns that these so-called kings "have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." Verse 13. That is, they surrender their power to the beast, an evidence of their confidence in this restored kingdom. But this great new confederacy of political and ecclesiastical power is short-lived. They reign "as kings one hour with the beast." Verse 12. Some interpret the expression "one hour" as an actual measurement of time, an hour being $\frac{1}{24}$ part of a day; and $\frac{1}{24}$ of a prophetic day or a literal year would be fifteen days. Others, however, claim it is an expression of an indefinite period. In any case, it is indeed a "short space" of time, but sufficient for this resuscitated power to make her blasphemous and arrogant claim, when she says: "I sit a queen, and am no widow." Revelation 18:7. To make the sin the greater, this confederacy of evil passes sentence of death upon anyone who refuses to render her homage. All who do identify themselves with her, will receive the mark of the beast. Revelation 13:16.

This revived power of the papacy actually constitutes another head; and when, for a brief time, the beast and the false prophet unite their powers, they will then constitute another head, i.e., even "the eighth." But this eighth head "is of the seven." Revelation 17:11.

She says she is "no widow." She was widowed when she was stripped of her temporal power in 1798, but before the end of time she will be completely reinstated, and all "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" will pay her homage. Revelation 17:15. The kings of the earth will be committing spiritual fornication with her. That is, they will be in unholy alliance with her. Revelation 18:3. This will be the greatest union of church and state the world has ever known.

Babylon Denounced

To prepare His people for that tremendous crisis, God is sending His last message of mercy. The whole world will be illumined with the glory of that message (verse 1) which declares that Babylon, or the fallen church, has "become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (verse 2). A dove is the emblem of the Holy Spirit, but the emblems of Babylon are unclean and hateful birds, scavengers who feed on carrion. By her sorceries she deceived the nations (verse 23), and now, drunk with her wine, they are living in unholy alliance with her while the merchants are being made rich by her commerce. Babylon is not one church. In Revelation 17:5 she is called "the mother of harlots." She has daughters, other churches, and these partake of the same unholy nature and are found drinking her wine and teaching her doctrines that are not in harmony with the Bible.

"Come Out of Her, My People," Revelation 18:4

This is God's call today. "Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exists in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion. There are many of these who have never seen the special truths for this time. Not a few are dissatisfied with their present condition and are longing for clearer light. They look in vain for the image of Christ in the churches with which they are connected. As these bodies depart further and further from the truth, and ally themselves more closely with the world, the difference between the two classes will widen, and it will finally result in separation. The time will come when those who love God supremely can no longer remain in connection with such as are 'lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.'

"Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting

the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work. When those that 'believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness,' shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call, 'Come out of her, My people.' "—*The Great Controversy*, page 390. (See also pages 604-608.)

God's judgments are about to fall in the seven last plagues, and all who refuse to separate from Babylon and her sins will suffer destruction with her. "Flee out of the midst of Babylon," was God's message to Israel when ancient Babylon was about to fall. Jeremiah 51:6. As we have noticed, these plagues "come in one day." Revelation 18:8. This is a prophetic day, or a literal year. When those who have put their confidence in this great world power witness the complete collapse of the whole political, economic, religious, financial, and educational confederacy, they stand aghast, crying, "Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." Verse 10. Four times we find the expression "one hour." It is for just "one hour" that the powers of the world reign with her (Revelation 17:12); in "one hour" her judgment comes (Revelation 18:10); in "one hour" her riches come to nought (verse 17); in "one hour" she is made desolate (verse 19).

Like the ancient Babel builders, whose efforts to build a tower whose top would reach up to heaven were thwarted, and who were scattered by a divine hand, so this modern Babylonian structure, whose "sins have reached unto heaven" (verse 5), will also collapse. The merchants that have been made rich by her abundance will ultimately tur'n upon her and destroy her. (Revelation 17:16.) Shipmasters and dealers in precious stones, farmers and traders, sculptors and manufacturers, all will bewail her burning.

Revelation 18:9-17. Having put their confidence in her, they see their hopes collapse as they witness her destruction.

Six times over we read that she will be no more at all. Verses 21-23. Her music, her industry, her finance, her commerce will be no more at all. Her destruction will be complete, and God charges her with the blood "of all that were slain upon the earth" (verse 24)—a tremendous picture of the final scenes which will usher in the coming kingdom of glory! When the whole confederacy of evil declares war on God and His people, the promise is that "the Lamb shall overcome them: . . . and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Revelation 17:14. God has *called* us by His grace. He has *chosen* us to be a holy people; it remains for us to be *faithful*. Entrance to the kingdom is not promised to the successful, but to the *faithful*. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Matthew 25:21.

To God's faithful servants comes the command, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1, 2.

"During the loud cry, the church, aided by the providential interpositions of her exalted Lord, will diffuse the knowledge of salvation so abundantly that light will be communicated to every city and town. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of salvation. So abundantly will the renewing Spirit of God have crowned with success the intensely active agencies, that the light of present truth will be seen flashing everywhere."—*Evangelism*, page 694.

The Triumph of the Church, and the Two Great Suppers

“THE marriage of the Lamb is come”! What a theme for the song of a multitude! And John hears them uttering their praises. It is truly the shout of triumph. The great system of evil and deception is overthrown. The great, boastful Babylon is now a desolation, and the saints are about to enter into their final reward. From the throne there peals forth a command, summoning the servants of God and all that fear Him, both great and small, to voice their praise. That chorus is like the sound of “many waters” and like “the voice of mighty thunderings.” They cry, in triumph, “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.” Revelation 19:6, 7.

Revelation 19

Eastern Marriage Customs. This burst of jubilation is one of the most sublime passages of all Scripture. But to understand it better, we must see it in the setting of a marriage according to the ancient customs of the East.

First there was the *betrothal*, considered much more binding than the “engagements” of our Western custom. Then came payment of the *wedding dowry*, an important part of the contract.

After this came a period of personal *preparation* on the part of the bride while the bridegroom was preparing the home.

The *marriage* was not conducted in a church, with a ceremony such as we are accustomed to, but was a simple ceremony when the bridegroom gave public recognition of his claim to the bride. This was done by throwing his cloak around her shoulder as the procession moved along the highway where the wedding feast was to be held.

The wedding feast, or the *marriage supper*, was a spectacular event lasting at times for days and even weeks. The father of the bridegroom provided this feast, and it was usually held at the father's home. This was an occasion for honoring his son, and, in the case of a royal wedding, the king would often bequeath a city or a whole province to the young couple as a token of affection and honor. This gift was usually made just prior to the wedding. Now let us make the application.

Who Is the Bride?

In Revelation 21:9, 10 the bride is clearly defined as the Holy City, New Jerusalem. But in other scriptures the church is called "the bride." Even in the Revelation itself, the bride is mentioned as being arrayed "in fine linen, clean and white," and this is called "the righteousness of saints"—a figure hardly applicable to a merely material city. Revelation 19:8. Is there any contradiction here? Decidedly not. The city is the bride, but a city without inhabitants is only a group of buildings and streets. It is the people who occupy those buildings that make the city what it is. And the New Jerusalem, with its jasper walls and golden streets, all radiant with the glory of God, is to be filled with the righteous of all ages. Moreover, the Holy City is not spoken of as the bride in the Revelation until the saints are already occupying it. Paul calls the heavenly Jerusalem "the mother of us all." Galatians 4:26. Thus he likens the church to the children of the bride. Our Lord does the same when He speaks of His people as "the children of the bridechamber." Mark 2:19. In His parables He likens

the church to the guests (Matthew 22:11), and on another occasion to "ten virgins," or the maids of honor (Matthew 25:1). These different illustrations are used to teach important lessons. This is not a contradiction. It rather opens up new vistas of divine revelation. We need them all in order to get the full picture.

From the beginning of human history, God has been seeking subjects for His kingdom. When Adam sinned, the kingdoms of this world were claimed by Satan, man's seducer. But in "the fullness of the time," God Himself came in the person of His Son "to seek and to save that which was lost," and by the sacrifice of His own life the Son purchased back the lost possession. He is the Redeemer, or the heavenly Goel, as we noticed in chapter 6. And we must never forget that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19.

Anticipating the time when the kingdom would again be restored to the lost race, God has, through all the centuries, been calling men to forsake their sins and come into fellowship with Him. In the Scriptures the relationship between God and His people has often been illustrated by the bridegroom and the bride. See Isaiah 54:5; 62:5; Jeremiah 2:32; 6:2; Hosea 2:19, 20; Matthew 9:15; John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:32. The most beautiful illustration of this revelation of God's love for His people, however, is found in the story of Abraham's sending his servant to seek a bride for his son, Isaac. See Genesis 24.

When God called the nation of Israel, He spoke of it as a betrothal. "I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness," He said. Hosea 2:19. Some separate these scriptures, endeavoring to apply them either to Israel as a nation, or to the church as separate from Israel, depending upon the viewpoint of the particular interpreter. God has ever had only one church—made up of all nations and gathered out of every generation of men. In Acts 7:38 we read of "the church in the wilderness." This church was definitely composed of those whom Moses led out of Egypt. They were part of the true church of God, which has existed ever since the days of Adam. For this bride, or the church, the heavenly

Bridegroom paid a dowry far above the price of gold and rubies. This dowry was His own blood, which He freely gave.

From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

—Samuel J. Stone.

After His sacrifice came the *interval of separation* when He went back to His Father's house, during which time the bride was to make herself ready. She was to "be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:8. See also chapter 7:13.

While the bride is making herself ready, the Bridegroom is preparing a place for her. "I go to prepare a place for you," He said. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." John 14:2, 3. O blessed reception when we are called to His side!

In Christ we have been chosen from eternity. Ephesians 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:9. Throughout the Old Testament dispensation the *wedding* has been announced. When the Son of God assumed our flesh, the *betrothal* took place. When He sacrificed Himself on Calvary, the *dowry* was paid. Since He ascended, *the bride has been preparing herself and the Bridegroom has been preparing her home*—the New Jerusalem. Soon *He will come and call her* to occupy the place He has prepared.

Before He leaves the courts of glory, after having finished His intercession, He comes before the Father, the Ancient of Days, and there is "given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him." Daniel 7:13, 14. Then the announcement is made, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." Revelation 19:7.

If we think of the Holy City as the bride, then we know that city is ready. But it remains for the inhabitants of that city to be

ready, for soon the Bridegroom will ride forth in all the authority of heaven as He comes a Conqueror to claim His own. The apostle, describing that scene, says: "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war." Verse 11. See also verse 14. Note the thrilling description of the coming King contained in verses 12 and 13: His eyes like flames of fire, His head adorned with many crowns, His blood-red vesture and challenging title, "King of kings, and Lord of lords"! No wonder the ungodly are startled and the unprepared inhabitants of earth flee to the rocks and mountains, begging to be buried "from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb"! Revelation 6:16.

In contrast with this is the waiting bride—the church. The promise is: "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Revelation 19:9. When the Bridegroom comes, He catches up His people and leads them back to the kingdom of His Father, where they will partake of the marriage supper. Looking forward to that time, Jesus said: Ye shall "eat and drink at My table in My kingdom." Luke 22:30. Again, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." Matthew 26:29.

When Does the Wedding Take Place?

When Jesus has finished His intercessory ministry, He then comes before "the Ancient of Days" to receive the kingdom and dominion for which He died. Daniel 7:13. This is actually the marriage of the Bridegroom—the Lamb—and occurs before He returns to earth for His saints. His waiting saints, those caught up to meet Him, are then taken to "the marriage supper of the Lamb" in the Father's house. Revelation 19:7-9. Jesus said: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding." Luke 12:35, 36. See *Early Writ-*

ings, pages 55, 251, 280; *The Great Controversy*, pages 426-428.

Those waiting saints are the bride for whom He comes. The kingdom and the subjects of the kingdom are all one. As guests they go in to the wedding feast; as the bride they share the wedding gift which is bestowed by the Father as a token of His affection when "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." "And the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." Daniel 7:27, 22. Marvelous possession! Hasten on, great day of God!

The Second Supper

The closing verses of chapter 19 bring to view another supper. This is not the marriage supper of joy and victory, which will be celebrated when the righteous gather in the Father's presence, but it is the tragic supper of the birds of prey who come to feed on the flesh of kings and captains, those who, having rejected the invitation to the wedding feast of the Lamb, are destroyed by the brightness of the appearing of our Lord. The days in which we live are days of preparation. While the people of God are preparing themselves to meet their Lord in peace, the nations of earth are preparing themselves for war and bloodshed. Here is the call that goes to the nations: "Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near." Joel 3:9. The slogan of our day seems to be, Talk peace but prepare for war. Surely the harvest is ripening.

A Safe Hiding Place

Soon the beast and the false prophet, the two great systems of deception, are to be finally cast into the consuming fires of God (Revelation 19:20), and the wicked, so long boastful and defiant, will then be destroyed "with the brightness of His coming."

Frenzied with fear, the wicked, as they see the Lord coming in majesty and power, hasten to "the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory

of His majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Lordly palaces and so-called fireproof buildings will burn like pitch. The only thing that will stand in that day will be a godly character. It was character and Christian experience which the foolish virgins lacked in the Master's parable. Matthew 25:1-8. God says, "I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Isaiah 13:11, 12. Precious promise!

From the throne of God a voice was heard saying, "Praise our God, all ye His servants." Revelation 19:5. The word *thronos*, translated as "throne," or "seat," occurs 50 times in this book, referring 37 times to the throne of God, and 13 times to the throne of Satan. Thus we have a battle between thrones and the kingdoms they represent. At God's throne His character is vindicated and the purpose of sin exposed. When the great judgment closes, two announcements peal forth from the throne: first, "It is done!" and then, "Behold, I come quickly!" John sees this mighty King descending in majesty, His brow adorned with many diadems, for Christ is King of a sevenfold kingdom: "King of the Jews"—racial; King of Israel—national; King of Righteousness—spiritual; King of the ages—historical; King of saints—ecclesiastical; King of heaven—celestial; King of glory—supernal. All these are united in the title "King of kings." Revelation 19:16.

When David overthrew the king of Ammon he took his crown. It is told that when the Prince of Wales defeated King John of Bohemia at the Battle of Crécy he brought back King John's crown in which there were three ostrich plumes; ever since then the emblem of the Prince of Wales has been three feathers, under which are the words, *ich dien*, I serve. When Jesus conquered death and the author of sin, He wrested from him his claim to kingship. And so He descends as King of kings and Lord of lords. He died that He might make us citizens of His kingdom.

Christ's Final Victory Over Sin; The Millennium

THE history of this little planet, earth, is the story of a bitter conflict between two opposing forces: the kingdom of light and truth led by Christ and His angels, and the kingdom of darkness and error led by the devil and his angels.

Angels are not human beings who have departed this life. They never lived on this earth. They are a higher order of creature than man. They existed long before this world was created. As God's messengers and representatives, they have the oversight of divine plans throughout the mighty universe. Like all intelligent beings, at the time they were created they were given the power of choice. Their loyalty to God was not something forced upon them, for God wants His creatures to serve Him through love rather than through fear or force.

Revelation 20

"War in Heaven." Previous studies have revealed that, back in the cycle of the ages, rebellion broke out among the angels and one third of these heavenly beings proved disloyal to God. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and

Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12:7-9. That war which began in heaven has continued through the ages. When our first parents proved disloyal to their Creator and yielded allegiance to Satan, they thus became the servants of sin and allies of the enemy of God. By subtle strategy the devil had conquered men, and, as a usurper, he claimed this world as his kingdom.

The Earth a Battlefield

This transplanted the scene of the controversy, and the earth became the battlefield of the conflict. It was to bring this little world back into harmony with the universe and to save mankind from the dominion of Satan, that the Son of God left His home in heaven, came to earth, lived a sinless life, suffered indignities at the hand of degenerate men, and died a vicarious death. He did all this to give every human being on earth an opportunity of breaking from the power of Satan, and of becoming by the grace of God a member of the family of heaven. All who believe on Him are made sons and daughters of God, and every angel in glory becomes a messenger of God sent forth to help us. Hebrews 1:14.

Sin to Be Destroyed

But the time is coming when the instigator of sin, the devil, together with all his angels and his followers, will be destroyed. Sin will then be eradicated from the universe. This will take place at the *end* of the 1,000 years, or the millennium. At the *beginning* of the millennium the devil will be arrested and imprisoned. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." Revelation 20:1, 2. This occurs when Christ returns as "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Revelation 19:16. The devil is actually a supernatural gangster, and, the time having drawn near for his death

sentence, he is now arrested and bound awaiting his execution.

The chain which binds him cannot be literal, for a spirit being could not be held by a material chain. It is rather a chain of circumstances, each link forged by an event over which the devil and his angels have no power. Let us notice these events, bearing in mind that many more Scriptural references could be given for each point.

Our Lord's Return: Literal, Visible, and Personal

"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence," said David. Psalm 50:3. Jesus said, "I will come again." John 14:3. "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30. Paul said, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God." 1 Thessalonians 4:16. John said, "Every eye shall see Him." Revelation 1:7.

Righteous Dead Raised

Jesus declared, "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life." John 5:28, 29. Paul declared, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. . . . They that are Christ's at His coming." 1 Corinthians 15:22, 23. "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." Verse 52.

Great Earthquake—Cities Broken Down— Earth a Wilderness

When Jesus returns, the earth will be convulsed. The prophets are a united voice as they emphasize this fact. "And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." Revelation 16:18. "The earth is utterly broken down, . . . the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard. . . . The Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth." Isaiah 24:19-21. "I beheld, and,

lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord." Jeremiah 4:26. "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void." Verse 23.

The Living Righteous Translated

Paul declares: "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up . . . in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Jesus said, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth [or, "is living"] and believeth in Me shall never die." John 11:25, 26. Like Enoch and Elijah, neither of whom died but were taken up from this world into heaven, so will the righteous who are alive at that time be caught up.

The Living Wicked Slain by the Brightness of His Glory

When Jesus appears in glory, the sight will be tremendous. The apostle declares, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God." 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8. "Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

Those tremendous events will bring an anticlimax to all that the devil has been claiming through the ages. He has made all kinds of promises to men; promises he cannot make good. He told Jesus he would give Him all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them if only He would bow down and worship him. Luke 4:5, 6. Satan never could have fulfilled that promise, for this world was not his to give. True, he claimed it, and had Christ not defeated the enemy, this world would really then have become the kingdom of Satan and his hosts. But, thanks be to God, our Lord won the victory over sin and Satan, and when He returns He will take possession of the kingdoms of this world, which He won by His sinless life and vicarious death, and then the works

of sinful man will all be destroyed. "The towers shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground." Ezekiel 38:20, margin. Every "high tower" and every "fenced wall" and "all the ships" and "the idols" will be destroyed when the Lord ariseth to "shake terribly the earth." Isaiah 2:12-21. In that great day the earth, with all its boasted grandeur, its lovely palaces, and its earthquake-proof buildings, will be reduced to ruin and rubble.

The Bottomless Pit

The Greek word *abussos* is that from which we get our English word "abyss." It is translated "deep" in Romans 10:7, and is applied to the grave. The Greek translation of Genesis 1:2 uses the same word in the description of the earth before creation: "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the *deep*." Almost the same language is employed by the prophet Jeremiah when he says, "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light." Jeremiah 4:23. It is evident that this follows the coming of the Lord in glory, for verse 26 says: "All the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord." The story, however, is not finished. "For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end." Verse 27. The works of sinful man must be eradicated before God can remake the world. So we read: "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down [marginal reading: "and perverteth the face thereof"]. . . . The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word." Isaiah 24:1-3.

Then he says, "The inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." Verse 6. These will be the despisers of the grace of God who have walked in the "broad" way of destruction. They will be burned or destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming. Those who are left are the ones who have accepted salvation and have walked in the "narrow" way that leads to life. Matthew 7:13, 14. On this desolate earth the devil will be bound. Satan

was once the leader of the angelic hosts of heaven. Ezekiel 28:14-19. Through his sin he lost his high position. He was cast out and has been sinking lower and lower. When Christ returns to take the faithful to Himself, the devil and his angels will be confined to this planet and for a thousand years will be forced to wander up and down the dark wilderness of broken cities and chaos to behold the tragic result of sin.

Where Are the Righteous?

Jesus said, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matthew 13:43. When our Lord returns, all the righteous, both the resurrected dead and the translated living, are "caught up" to be with Him, and they accompany Christ and His angels back to heaven. During this time they will be judging the world; that is, they will be studying the records of heaven. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" says the apostle Paul. He further says: "We shall judge angels." 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3. John says, "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Revelation 20:4. See also Psalm 149:5-9.

The wicked dead are not raised at Christ's second coming, for they "lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20:5. All the wicked who are living when Jesus appears will be slain by His glory. See 2 Thessalonians 2:8. Therefore there will be no human inhabitants remaining on the earth; it will be indeed "desolate."

Satan Loosed

The devil will be in confinement during the thousand years. He deceives "the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." Revelation 20:3. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." Verse 7. He was bound by circumstances; therefore the reversal of those conditions will

release him, and he “shall go out to deceive the nations, . . . to gather them together to battle.” Verse 8. The second resurrection, which is a resurrection to judgment, occurs at the end of the millennium. Verse 5.

The Resurrection of the Wicked

John in vision witnessed this tremendous resurrection. He says: “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [the grave] delivered up the dead which were in them.” “And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Verses 13, 12. Speaking of this resurrection, Jesus said: “The hour is coming, in the which *all* that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; . . . they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” or judgment. John 5:28, 29. “The rest of the dead,” that is, those who were not raised in the first resurrection at the second coming of Jesus, “lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” Revelation 20:5. After they are raised, the devil goes forth to deceive them. Verse 8. Although resurrected by the power of God, they are nevertheless still enemies of God, and Satan, as their great leader, will persuade them that this is their opportunity to establish their eternal kingdom on the earth.

The Holy City Descends

Then the prophet says, “And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Revelation 21:2. Beholding this mighty city descending in all its radiant glory, its jasper walls and golden streets beyond anything mortal eyes have ever beheld; then seeing it settle down on the site of the old Jerusalem—this startles the hosts of the wicked, and in consternation they flee from the scene. Read Zechariah 14:5, 6. But Satan then deceives them into thinking that they can take the city by force. And John says, “They went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.” Revelation 20:9.

Coming near to the city, the wicked will be able to gaze through its transparent walls of jasper. To their astonishment they will recognize some in that city whom they have despised. But these are inside the city and saved, while they themselves are outside the city and lost.

Before the execution of their sentence of judgment, the whole drama of sin and salvation will pass in review before them. Above that glorious city the Lord Himself will appear, and as scene after scene comes before them in panorama, they see the plan of God to save this lost world. What John was privileged to behold as he stood in the throne room of the Eternal to receive the Revelation of Jesus Christ, all will be enabled to see with undimmed vision. "Now Christ again appears to the view of His enemies. Far above the city, upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this throne sits the Son of God, and around Him are the subjects of His kingdom. . . . Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan, but who, plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Saviour with deep, intense devotion."—*The Great Controversy*, page 665.

Then the realization of their eternal loss sweeps over the wicked, and a mighty wail bursts from their lips as they see, too late, that they can never be sharers in the kingdom of God. They can never be saved, for the day of salvation will have ended prior to the second advent of Jesus at the beginning of the thousand years. Like Esau's, their repentance will come too late. Jesus said, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." Luke 13:28. The saddest words that will ever be uttered are these: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jeremiah 8:20.

The Final Destruction of Sin

The tragic story of sin comes to an end as the wicked are destroyed root and branch. "Fire came down from God out of

heaven, and devoured them," John says. Revelation 20:9. It is in mercy that the devil and his hosts are destroyed, for "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1:15. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented [or tested] day and night forever and ever." Revelation 20:10. While this destruction is eternal in its effect, yet the process of destruction will be, as it were, but "a moment." "The wicked shall perish: . . . they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." Psalm 37:20. When the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, they suffered "the vengeance of eternal fire." Jude 7. In Lamentations 4:6 we read that Sodom "was overthrown as in a moment." It is "everlasting punishment;" not a process, but an effect. "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Malachi 4:1. David said, "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." Psalm 37:10.

"The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."—*The Great Controversy*, page 678.

"The conflict is over. Tribulation and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven as the ransomed ones take up the joyful strain, Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and lives again, a triumphant conqueror."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 602.

After the destruction, Christ, the Conqueror of sin and the Creator of the universe, re-creates this earth, which becomes the eternal home of the saved. "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

The New Earth: The Home of the Saved

AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." Revelation 21:1.

Revelation 21 to 22:5

At last the controversy is ended; the battle won. This blood-stained planet where sorrow, pain, and tears have held sway has been transformed into a place of joy and peace. Sin and sinners are no more. The universe is clean, and God's character is vindicated. How precious are the promises of God! "We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Isaiah 65:17. Even the memory of sin will be blotted out.

The Three Worlds

Peter speaks of three worlds: "the world that then was" (the world before the Flood), "the heavens and the earth, which are now" (the present world), and the "new heavens and a new earth" (the world to come). 2 Peter 3:6, 7, 13. Jesus said: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5. The meek, those who have wrought His righteousness, are the ones that shall inherit the new earth. But it will not be as it is today, sin-cursed and sorrow-smitten; it will be a world of radiant glory.

"In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more

abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 26.

Ever since man sinned, this world has been the battleground of the forces of good and evil. The meek have actually possessed little of it. But a change is coming, when the meek shall inherit the earth. They do not have to buy it, nor fight for it; it is an inheritance, redeemed for them forever. "The time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." Daniel 7:22. And in that day, "The Lord shall be king over all the earth. . . . And there shall be no more utter destruction." Zechariah 14:9-11.

"No More Sea"—"No More Curse"

As the apostle of love penned these words, *no more sea*, his joy knew no bounds, for isolated as he was on the penal isle of Patmos, the sea only made more real the cruel separation and loneliness that gnawed at his heart. But when God remakes the earth, everything that tells the sad story of sin and sorrow will be obliterated. How often John had heard the sea as it pounded that rocky coast. It spoke to him of the fury of war and commotion, of godless antagonism, of the deep mystery of iniquity. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest," declared Isaiah. In vision John had beheld ferocious beasts arising, as symbols of great dictator nations whose purpose it was to take peace from the earth. But in the earth made new there will be no fury of the tempest, no wreck-strewn shore, but only the calm peace of eternity. Not only will there be a new humanity; there will also be a new geography.

This present world has much more water than land surface; in fact, three fifths of the earth's surface is covered by oceans. In the days of Noah "were all the fountains of the great deep broken up." Genesis 7:11. This is what caused the Flood; not merely the downpour of rain. The earth was convulsed, resulting in tre-

mendous physical changes. Oceans seem essential to our present world. They constitute a great system of sanitation as well as a water supply, the clouds being the result of evaporation. But in the new earth, things will be different. "There shall be no more curse," says John. Revelation 22:3. Actually the earth today suffers under a threefold curse. When Adam sinned, the earth was cursed, and forthwith it brought forth "thorns also and thistles." Genesis 3:17, 18. Later when the first diabolical crime, the murder of Abel, was committed, the ground suffered another curse; it no longer yielded of its full "strength." Genesis 4:11, 12. After the Flood, God said: "I will not *again* curse the ground any more for man's sake." Genesis 8:21. The Flood was the final curse because of man's sin and corruption.

Many today ridicule the Flood story. But Christ confirmed it. He said, They "knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away." Matthew 24:39. Evidence piles on evidence in every land of earth testifying to a world-wide destruction by water. Not only the mighty oceans, but great, yawning canyons and torn, twisted strata stand as tombstones of a buried civilization. God's word says, "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." 2 Peter 3:6. Only water action could deposit the abundant marine life which we find today in fossil form in mountains 15,000 to 20,000 feet high. The world today is actually a vast cemetery. But when God recreates it there will be no "leftovers" to remind us of sin and catastrophe.

The New Creation

"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new;" not "all new things." Revelation 21:5. This earth is not to be destroyed, but to be renewed. It will be an eternal witness of God's great love. This little world, where the Creator Himself suffered humili'ion, shame, and death in order to redeem it; this place where His persecuted people have been but strangers and pilgrims; this sin-cursed land which Satan claimed as his own, is to be remade, and then it will be the habitation of the saved.

In that day “the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose,” and “the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad.” “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.” Isaiah 35:1, 5, 6. This is man’s long-lost home; lost through sin, but redeemed through grace. “The first dominion” (Micah 4:8) will be restored to the human family when God makes all things new. He promises that there will be a “restitution of all things.” Acts 3:21. The New Jerusalem will be the eternal capital of this restored kingdom.

Only the Overcomer Will Inherit the Kingdom

Every citizen of that kingdom will have been tested and tried. But some who have lived on this earth, perchance our neighbors, friends, or even loved ones, will not be there. The apostle reveals who it is that will have missed that inheritance. They are “the *fearful*, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderer, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars.” Revelation 21:8. The list begins with “the *fearful*.” They could have been with their Saviour for eternity, but they were *fearful*—too afraid to own their Lord. They feared the ridicule of friends. They feared the loss of their social prestige or perhaps their employment, so they hesitated to accept God’s message. They were not disreputable sinners; they were not criminals, murderers, adulterers, or drunkards; they were *fearful*—afraid to do what they knew to be right, so they lost the kingdom. At last they are found outside the kingdom and in the company of the abominable, the sorcerers, and the whoremongers. It takes courage to obey God. It costs something to be on the side of truth, but what a terrible price is paid by those who fail to accept citizenship in the kingdom of God! Sin is always costly.

Another class who find themselves outside the city are the *unbelieving*; those who think it a mark of scholarship to doubt the word of God. Nor will that city have a place for *whosoever “maketh a lie.”* Verse 27. Some who would shun to *tell* a lie will

not hesitate to *make* a lie. By a glance or a nod a lie can be made. Sometimes lies are classified as "white lies," "black lies," "business lies," "society lies," "diplomatic lies." But no one who loves lies, tells lies, or works lies will get into that kingdom.

In the twelve foundations in that city wall will be found "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Verse 14. It is, therefore, not a Jewish city, although many Jews will be there. But they will be there, not because they are Jews, but because they have been overcomers through the grace of God. Not only are the names of the apostles engraved on the foundations, but also the names of the twelve tribes of Israel will be upon the twelve gates. Both dispensations are thus linked together. The overcomers from all the ages find entrance there. The city is immense and is built in a perfect square. John learned the measurement of it—12,000 furlongs, or 1,500 miles! Some would ridicule any attempt to interpret these measurements as literal. If not literal, then they are meaningless. Wonderful spiritual lessons may be brought from these descriptions, but we must never forget that the earth itself is literal and that its inhabitants are literal. To attempt to spiritualize this city away makes the message of the Revelation lose its appeal. God promises that the citizens of that eternal kingdom "shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." Isaiah 65:21. Then why wonder if the city which God has built and prepared for those that love Him is literal? Heaven is not a state of mind; it is a glorious place. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you."

The City Wall a Blaze of Glory

Mortal eyes have never beheld a city such as this—a city without slums, without police officers, without law courts, even without sewers. There is nothing there that defiles; all flashes in the splendor of the glory of God. Golden streets, gates of pearl, and walls of jasper! It is garnished or adorned with all manner of transparent precious stones, which taken together reflect the colors of the rainbow—the sapphire, sky blue; chalcedony or agate, bluish

white; emerald, vivid green; sardonyx, carnelian or flesh-colored; sardius, vivid red; chrysolyte, bright yellow; beryl, sea-green; topaz, yellowish green; chrysoprasus, pale green; hyacinth or jacinth, sapphire-blue; amethyst, violet color. As John beheld this glory in vision it was a striking contrast with the dust and dirt of barren Patmos. Those prophetic pictures were first sent to Christians who knew the heavy hand of persecution. John was telling them that if they but held fast their faith, even in the face of death or devils, this Holy City would be theirs. Paul said, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:18.

Streets of Gold and Gates of Pearl

How lavish is the appearance of this city! Gold, the one thing for which so many men have sold their souls, will be under the feet of the redeemed in that glorious city. And the gates will never close. Ancient cities often had but one gate, which could be closed and guarded at night. But this city has twelve gates, and these will never close, for no enemy can enter that fair land. And the gates are pearls. Pearls are produced by suffering. When a grain of sand works its way into the oyster shell, there seems only one thing for that lowly creature to do. To deny the existence of the sand is futile, for it is there. To rebel is useless. So, slowly and patiently, the oyster begins to build layer upon layer of a plastic, milky substance which at last covers up the cutting edges of the sand, leaving a lovely coating over all, which hardens to become a beautiful pearl. Thus the trial is conquered and the misfortune turned to blessing. All who enter that fair city will pass through a gate of pearl, a symbol of suffering. By the abundant grace of God they have turned their trials into triumphs; every gnawing sin was covered with the righteousness of Christ.

No Temple Therein

"I saw no temple therein." Revelation 21:22. In the temple service of the Hebrews the most prominent feature in the ritual

worship was the sacrifice. The temple itself stood for a sacrificial system. In the new heaven and the new earth, sin and sacrifice will be no more. The only thing to remind us of the price of our redemption will be the wounds in our Saviour's hands, feet, and side. The redeemed will have unbroken fellowship with the Father and communion with all His creation, and "affliction shall not rise up the second time." Nahum 1:9. Sin will have come to an end. Those only who are saved will walk in the light of that city. But representatives of every nation will be there.

No hospitals or cemeteries will be needed in that fair land, for "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." Isaiah 33:24. What will it be to live in a land where there will be joy without sorrow, laughter without tears, and life without sickness and death? "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21:4.

The Animals Different in Nature

When God created this earth, He made the animals to be companions to man. But sin came in, and the whole animal kingdom, instead of being affectionate, became quarrelsome and belligerent; the beasts became ferocious. All this, however, will be changed forever in that coming kingdom, for there "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah 11:6-9.

The Wounds of Sin Healed by the Tree of Life

When Adam sinned he was denied access to the tree of life. Sin must not be perpetuated. The way was barred by cherubim

with a flaming sword. Wounded in soul and bowed under the burden of their sin, our first parents left the garden of God. But all that was lost will be restored. In the earth made new we will eat of the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of life so that we may live forever. Revelation 22:1, 2; Genesis 3:22. Such is the prophetic picture of God's perfect provision—perfect fellowship and perfect protection. Redeemed by His grace, we will be His companions throughout eternity.

Our Lord became a member of our human family that He might make us members of His heavenly family. Paul says, "Through Him we . . . are no longer exiles, migrants and aliens, excluded from the rights of citizens; but you now share citizenship with the saints—God's own people, consecrated and set apart for Himself; and you belong to God's [own] household." Ephesians 2:18-19, *Amplified Bible*. When the redeemed of all ages gather in God's banqueting house, God's Word says His banner over us will be love. Song of Solomon 2:4. In Revelation 12:5 we read that the Child born to be our Saviour is to "rule all nations with a rod of iron." But His rulership will be that of a Shepherd who wipes away "all tears from their eyes." Revelation 7:17. The rod with which He rules His people is labeled "LOVE."

The Conclusion

THE great pageant is over. The final curtain has closed. Through scene after scene the prophet has led us, as he pictured Christ and His care for His people. We have witnessed the church passing through crushing conflicts and suffering bitter persecutions, yet always she has lived to triumph over her enemies. Her constant inspiration, that which has continually beckoned her forward, has been the promise of a place at last in the land beyond the sunset. The conviction that her Bridegroom will return has ever been her "blessed hope," the polestar by which the church has steered her steady course.

Revelation 22:6-21

As the beauties of the new earth and the glories of the Holy City suddenly burst upon us in the closing scenes of this drama, they leave us thrilled but sobered. Now hear these words: "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth: . . . but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Revelation 21:27. It is indeed a *holy* city, for every one of its occupants will be an overcomer. The glorious kingdom of Jesus Christ will be the eternal home of the righteous of all ages.

A Final Greeting From the Revealer

And now the Revealer steps forward, as it were, and, standing in front of the curtain, He says a final word. He is eager to impress us with this fact, that the things we have seen and heard are "faithful and true." Abundant blessings are also pronounced upon him "that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Revelation 22:6, 7. The Lord realized that the message of this

book would be unwelcome in some circles and that some would even try to change the words, so He gave us this final word to assure us of its importance. He says: "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. . . . For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this book." Verses 16-19. Solemn words indeed! This was doubtless a warning to copyists of succeeding centuries to be exceedingly careful not to change a word. But it is also a warning to all interpreters. One who misapplies the message of this book imperils his own soul.

An Unsealed Book

The Revelation is not a sealed book. A portion of Daniel's prophecy was sealed. He was told to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end." Daniel 12:4. But John, on the contrary, was told distinctly, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." Revelation 22:10. If we had no other evidence than this one statement, it would be sufficient to reveal the weakness and the fallacy of the futuristic interpretation. Futurism is that method of interpretation which endeavors to throw these prophecies away off into the future as if they had no message for the church of the centuries. Those who follow this papal error, which was a direct attack on the Protestant Reformation, lose the very purpose of the book. Those who try to make these prophecies apply *after* Christ has returned for His church are unwittingly sealing "the sayings of the prophecy of this book." The Revelation is not for the future alone; its message is for the whole Christian Era. All the Reformers of the sixteenth century interpreted this prophetic book in the historical method, finding its fulfillment in history.

When Mercy's Door Closes—Salvation Past

As Jesus Christ, our exalted High Priest and Judge, concludes His ministry of intercession, He pronounces sentence of judgment in these most solemn words: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11, 12.

These momentous words spoken by "the judge of all the earth" settle forever the destiny of every soul that has ever lived on this earth. There is no suggestion anywhere in God's word of a second chance. Nor is there any need for another opportunity. True, not all have been in the same places of opportunity, but in the great judgment every influence which has played any part in the individual's life will be taken into account. "The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there." Psalm 87:6. We will be judged not merely by what we have done, but by what we might have done with the opportunities given us. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Genesis 18:25.

The Final Beatitude

Of the seven beatitudes found in the Revelation, this is the final one: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14. This passage is sometimes translated, "Blessed are those who wash their robes." The reading of the oldest manuscripts, however, is in accordance with the Authorized Version, as is evident from the quotations by early Christian writers who were quoting from older manuscripts which are no longer available to us today. Whichever reading is preferred the result is the same, for only those who have "washed their robes . . . in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14) are

able to "do His commandments." Obedience is never a ground of grace; but God's grace is the only ground for our obedience. It was disobedience that shut our first parents out of Eden and debarred them from the tree of life. And only through the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ and a life of submission to God's will can man be reinstated in the Paradise of God and again have access to the tree of life.

The Final Invitation

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Verse 17.

God's last command to Noah just before the Flood that swept his generation away was: "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." Genesis 7:1. A similar appeal is going to all mankind today. How tender is this appeal, and yet how far-reaching! Whosoever will, may come. Heaven is free; it is a prepared place for a prepared people. Jesus says: "Ye who are wandering, care-worn and weary, come! Share with Me My home of peace and joy and love—a home that will never be invaded by suffering, sorrow, and sin. For you I suffered and bled and died, taking your place in a world of darkness and death that you might share My place in the realms of light and love. Accept My invitation. It is for you. Come! Take all! It is yours 'without money and without price'! And now, having heard My invitation, will you not go and tell someone else?"

The primary mission of the church is not to fight but to invite others to accept God's love. A bride is not dressed in white that she may fight, but that she may be winsome. And Christ's bride "hath made herself ready" in His righteousness. Revelation 19:7.

"Let Him That Heareth Say, Come"

The camel caravans that moved through the desert did not always keep close together. But when the leader saw water in the distance, he would wave his arms, calling: "Come! Water!"

The next man would do the same, and the next, and the next, until all had heard the news. Having heard the news, the hearer must pass the word on to someone else.

The Throne of God and the Lamb, Revelation 22:1, 2

From that matchless throne of glory flows the wondrous river of life, and on its verdant banks of green blooms the fadeless tree of life. Those who reach that land of love shall never know hunger or thirst again. And the Good Shepherd Himself will lead His flock to fountains of living water. What joy to exchange the toil-worn garments of our pilgrimage for the beauteous robes of light!

While the glory of God like a molten sea
Bathes the immortal company.

All the wounds of all the wars, and all the hurts of hate and sin, will be forever banished when "the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Isaiah 30:26.

How wonderful to be in the society of heaven! Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, and Job; Esther, Elijah, David, and Ruth; Mary, Peter, Stephen, and Paul—the great and good of all the ages will be there. Beauty beyond comparison, flowers in infinite variety, fruits that never decay, fields of verdant green, music unheard by mortal ears, all combining to make more glorious your homeland and mine, dear friend, if by grace we have prepared ourselves to fellowship with God and holy angels. Soon we will lay down the cross and take the crown. Soon our days of sorrow will be past. Soon we will leave this vale of tears and be with Him whose glory fills creation.

At the end of a hard and toilsome day the aged prophet is seated on the rugged shore of Patmos. As the evening sun dips behind the watery horizon, the whole scene changes into a pageant of gold. In the glory of that spectacle the hardships of the day are forgotten as for a few moments he lives anew those scenes of wonder he beheld in vision. Before him is another "sea

of glass mingled with fire." By faith he hears again the voices of a great multitude in their paean of praise and victory. The song of creation sung by elders and angels he has already recorded (chapter 4), and also the new song of redemption (chapter 5). But the mighty song of re-creation and eternal victory fills his heart once more with jubilation. Winding his way back to his hut, he lifts his pen and writes: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee." Revelation 15:2-4.

Shall we be among them, dear friend? Will you and I join in that anthem of praise? In that wonderland of light the redeemed will contemplate the vast expanse of God's treasures as all the universe is opened for their study. What will it be to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and wing our tireless flight to worlds afar! How glorious to tell and retell the story of His love and grace! How rich a reward for a few years of heartache and sorrow if we can but revel in the harmonies of heaven and watch entranced the myriads of suns, stars, and systems all circling the throne of Deity! O day of rapture, speed thy dawning! The last recorded words of Jesus are, "Surely I come quickly." And with the saintly seer we say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Revelation 22:20, 21.

JESUS CHRIST, THE CENTER OF THE REVELATION

Every chapter contains its own revelation of Jesus Christ. Summarizing these thoughts, we see Him in:

- Chapter 1 As the all-sufficient Sacrifice and ministering Priest.
- Chapter 2 As the wonderful and sympathetic Reprover of the churches.
- Chapter 3 As the Creator, who shares His throne with men.
- Chapter 4 } As the Lamb slain from the foundation of the
- Chapter 5 } world and the center of adoration.
- Chapter 6 As the Leader of the church that goes forth conquering and to conquer.
- Chapter 7 As the Lamb among the blood-washed multitude.
- Chapter 8 } As the One who receives the prayers of the saints
- Chapter 9 } and restrains the powers of evil.
- Chapter 10 As the Angel encompassing land and sea, announcing "that there should be time no longer."
- Chapter 11 As the One who receives from His Father the kingdoms of this world.
- Chapter 12 As the promised Child who conquered death and ascended to the throne.
- Chapter 13 As the Author of the Lamb's book of life, which contains the names of the true worshipers.
- Chapter 14 As the Lamb of Mount Zion, sending His last message of mercy to the world.
- Chapter 15 } As the Lamb receiving praise, but whose judgments destroy the apostate kingdom.
- Chapter 16 }
- Chapter 17 } As the Lamb who calls His people from spiritual
- Chapter 18 } Babylon.
- Chapter 19 As descending King of kings and Lord of lords.
- Chapter 20 As the Angel who binds and destroys the devil.
- Chapter 21 As the Re-creator who wipes away all tears.
- Chapter 22 As the Judge who brings the final rewards and sends the last invitation to a doomed world.

APPENDIX

1. "The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them.

"The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 488, 489.

"How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days."—*Ibid.*, p. 488.

2. "God designed that the Prince of sufferers in humanity should be judge of the whole world. He who came from the heavenly courts to save man from eternal death; . . . He who submitted to be arraigned before an earthly tribunal, and who suffered the ignominious death of the cross,—He alone is to pronounce the sentence of reward or of punishment. . . .

"Both saints and sinners will recognize in Him who was crucified the Judge of all living."—Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, Nov. 22, 1898. (Also in *Questions on Doctrine*, page 687.)

"To Jesus the Son of man is committed all judgment. From His decision there is no appeal. . . . He will pronounce judgment, rendering to every man according to his works."—Ellen G. White, Manuscript 42, 1901.

3. "The Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision [the rejection of Christ] was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat on the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vividness it will appear before them

on the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah."—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 294.

4. Charles Wesley caught the meaning of these verses in his hymn:

Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
Thy strength speak for me:
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die."
The Father hears Him pray,
His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away
The presence of His Son;
His Spirit answers to the blood
And tells me I am born of God.

5. "The revenue of glory has been accumulating for this closing work of the third angel's message. The prayers that have been accumulating for the fulfillment of the promise, the descent of the Holy Spirit, not one has been lost. Each prayer has been accumulating ready to overflow all over the world."—Ellen G. White, Letter 96A, 1899.

6. Aesculapius was generally represented by a serpent entwined around the trunk of a dead tree, at the side of which springs up a young tree—the palm tree, a symbol of victory. (See illustration.) In Rome December 25 was hailed as *Natalis Invicti Solis* (the birthday of the unconquered sun). Adonis, the great sun-god, was mystically said to have been changed into a tree.



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